San Francisco Tribal Art Show 2025

Chris Boylan - Oceanic Arts

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Sydney Australia

I live in Sydney, Australia. Due to my many travels, I work from a home office and Sydney warehouse rather then a permanent gallery. My schedule includes several trips to Papua New Guinea and various Pacific regions, with regular exhibitions in Australia and overseas. An avid field collector, I still greatly enjoy these Pacific odysseys and always come across some fine and interesting artworks. Having said that, old collections and small auctions within Australia can also be a rich resource for artworks.

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NB. All prices are in $ US

Design: Grumpy Wombat, Sydney
Photos: Jenni Carter, Sydney

1. Two Giant Nassa Shell Rings, Loloi, Tolai people, Gazelle Peninsula, New Britain, PNG

Large Shell Bride price Currency. Most valuable “traditional money” among Tolai people. They always come in different diameters and thicknesses. Depending on the wealth of the owners. Nassa shells vare used as part of the traditional currency of the Tolai people, even still today. They are important for Bride Price Payment – when the dowry is paid for a new wife. Also at funeral ceremonies of important men and women, Loloi are used.
They are rarely sold or traded and few are found outside Papua New Guinea, and their traditional use within Tolai society. They are of great value and highly prized.
When a man accumulates many shells, he threads them on lengths of cane to keep them together and organized. These can be used in daily transactions also, to buy a pig, a canoe etc. When the man becomes quite wealthy, these shells on the cane are wound together into circles like this one and called “Loloi”. Usually, they are bound with pandanus, or banana leaves to preserve their whiteness, and stored away.
It becomes like a shell bank.

a) This is a truly impressively large Loloi, thick with shells.
82 cm diameter x 13 cm thick $ 6,000

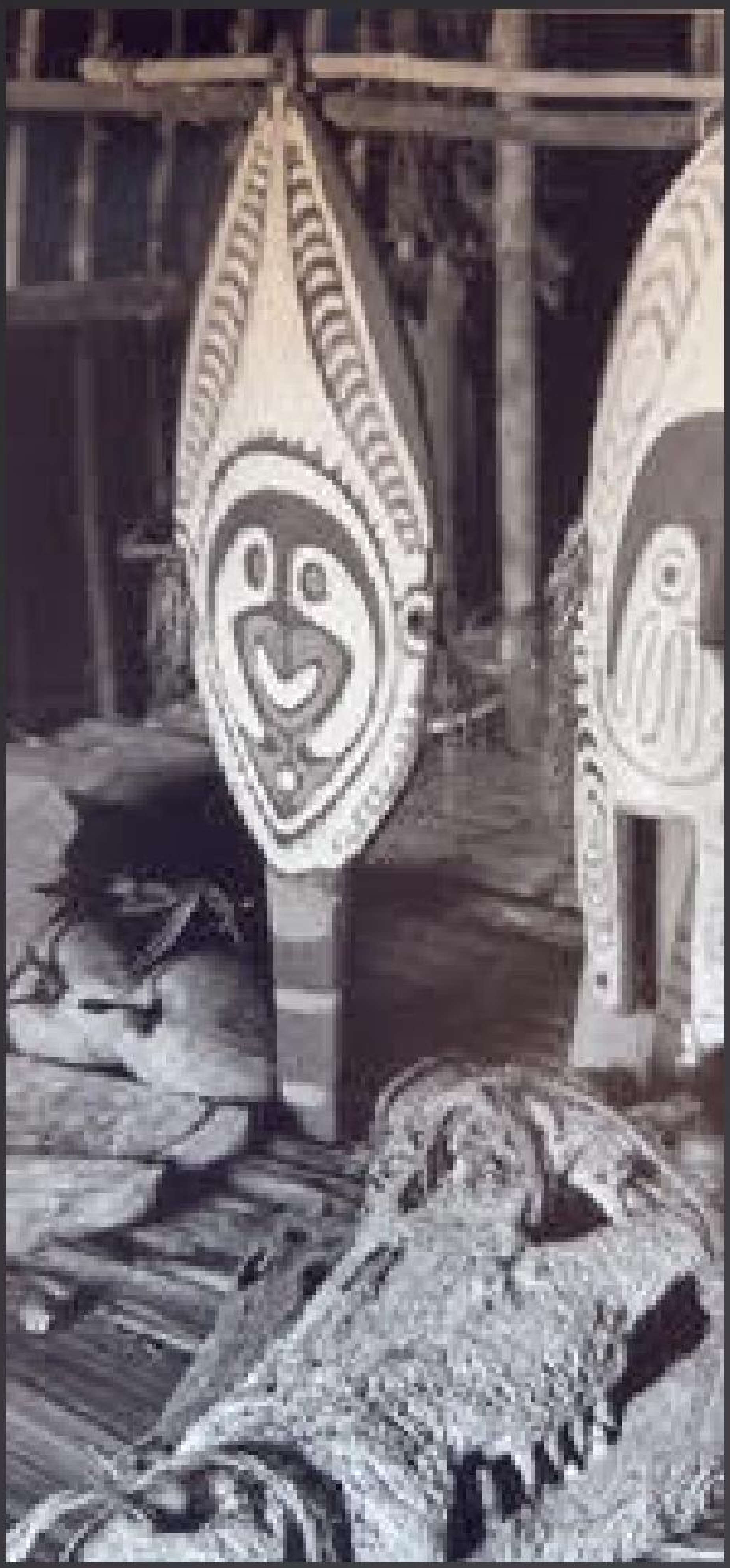
b) A more modest Loloi, but in traditional Tolai money, still of great value.
48 cm diameter x 9 cm thick $ 3,800

Photo taken c. 1900 by James Edge-Partington. Tolai people, near Rabaul.
The “Loloi” rings are held up, beside the DukDuk spirit figure. They are wrapped in pandanus leaves, the traditional way to store and preserve the whiteness of the shells.

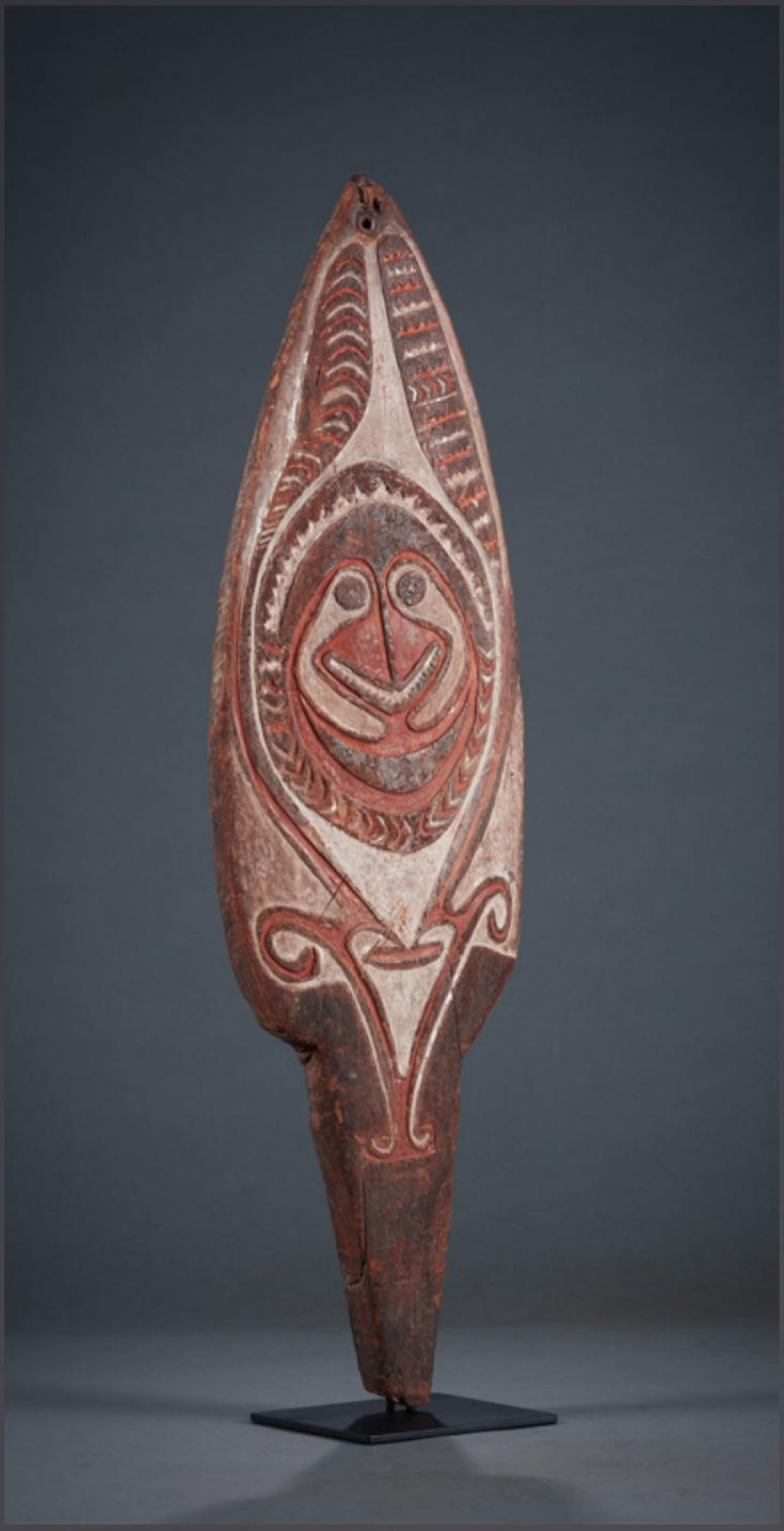
2. Coastal Namau Gope Board, Papuan Gulf, PNG
Ex-George Craig c. 1972, Perth; ex-important Hawaiian collection.

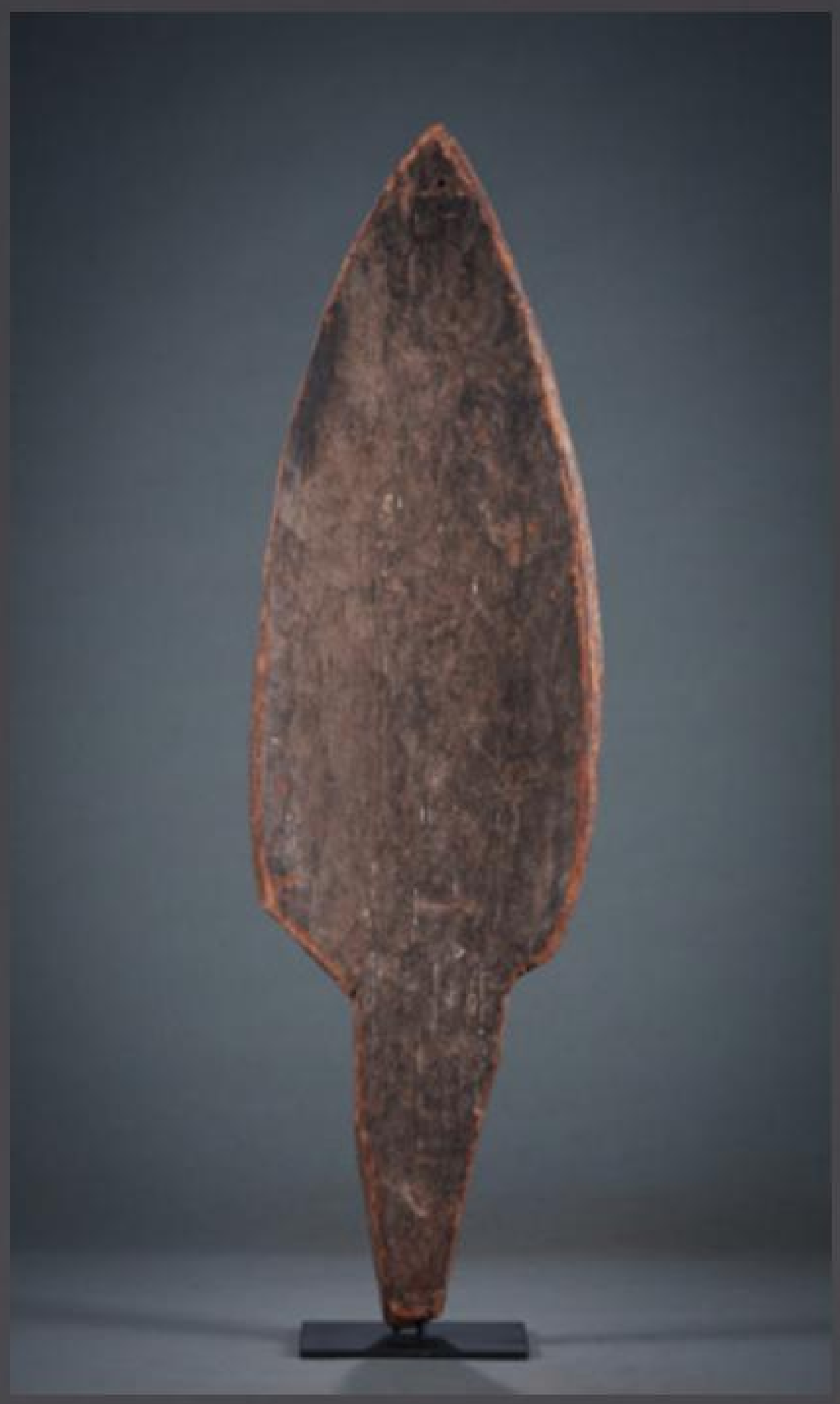
The coastal Namau gope of the *Purari* Delta have a distinctive form, with a broad oval form and narrower flange at the base. They are known as *kwoi*. These boards were displayed in clan cubicles with the *ravi*, the Men's Ceremonial House, and rarely left the confines of this building. There is a suggestion (Austen, 1934) that they were sometimes carried out at night during male initiation processions.
This *kwoi* has the typical large central face with surrounding asymmetric chevrons and sawtooth designs. This is a good early example, being at least early 20th Century, with a slight curve on the back, and a deep honey-coloured patina.

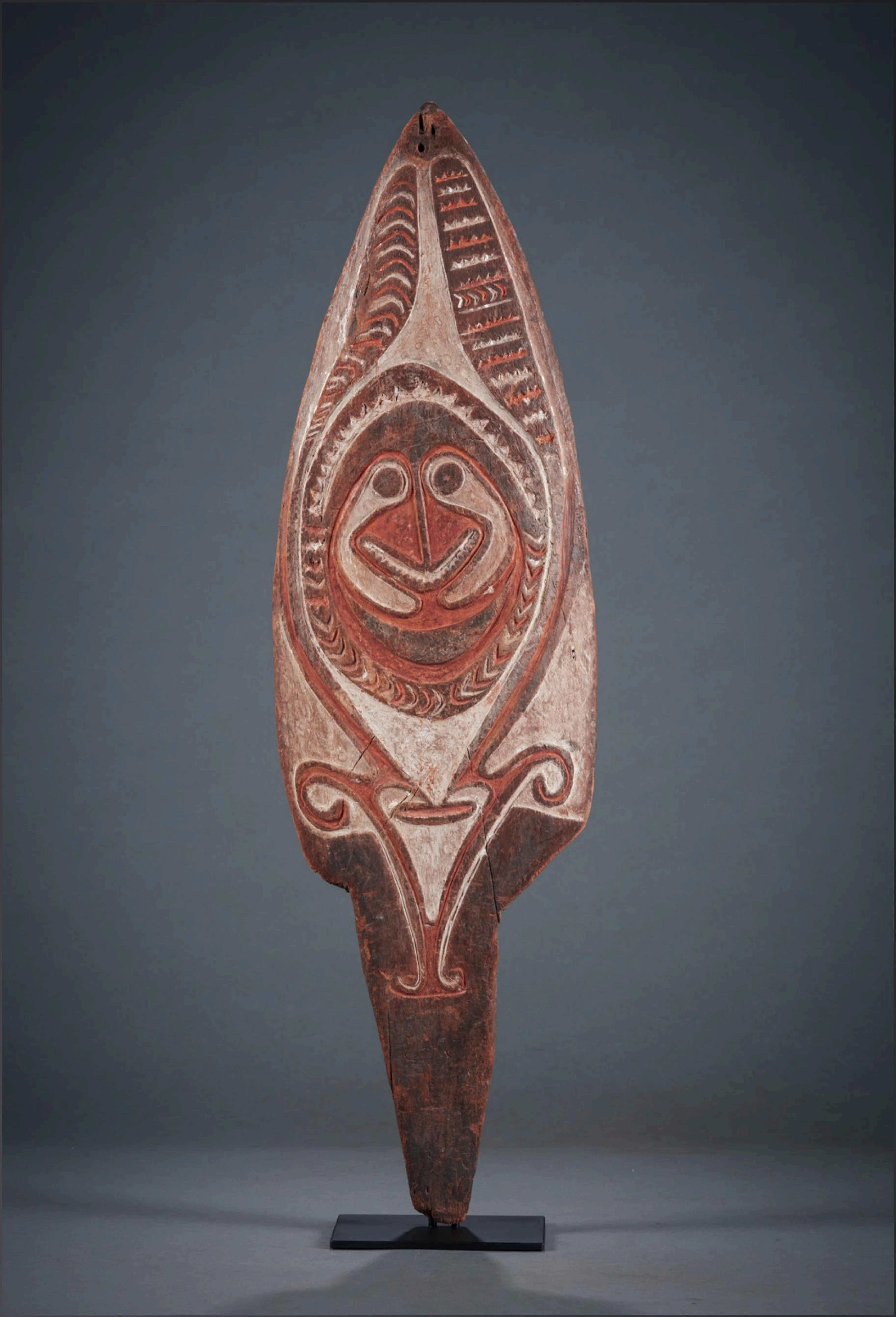
90 x 27 cm $ 7,000



Kwoi ancestral boards with a crocodile skull, Kaimari village, Gulf Province. Photo> Frank Hurley, 1921. Published:"- Frank Hurley in Papua",
Jim Specht and JOHN Fields, Robert Brown, Bathurst, 1984.





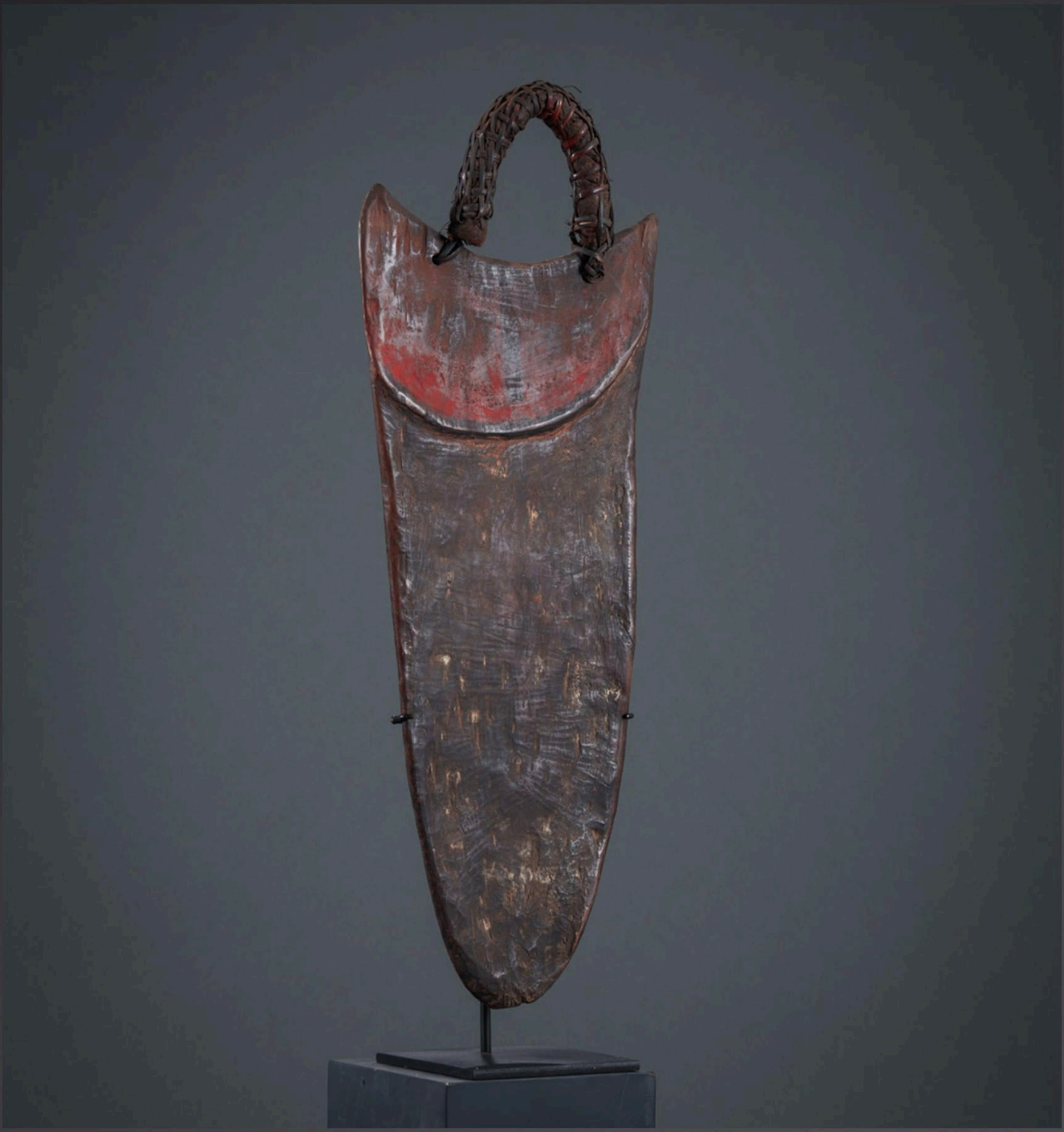


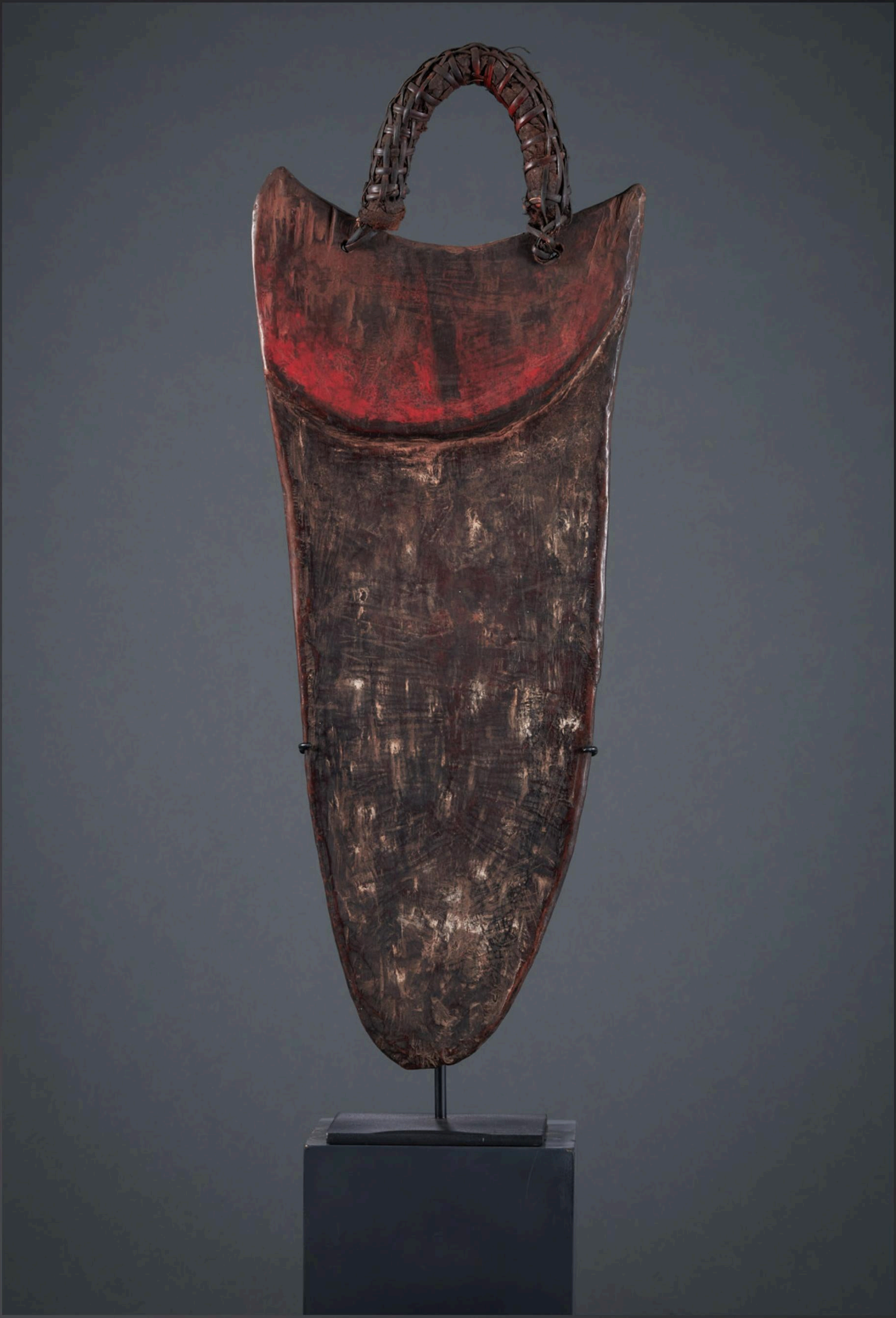
3. Old Fighting Shield, Wonenara, Eastern Highlands, PNG

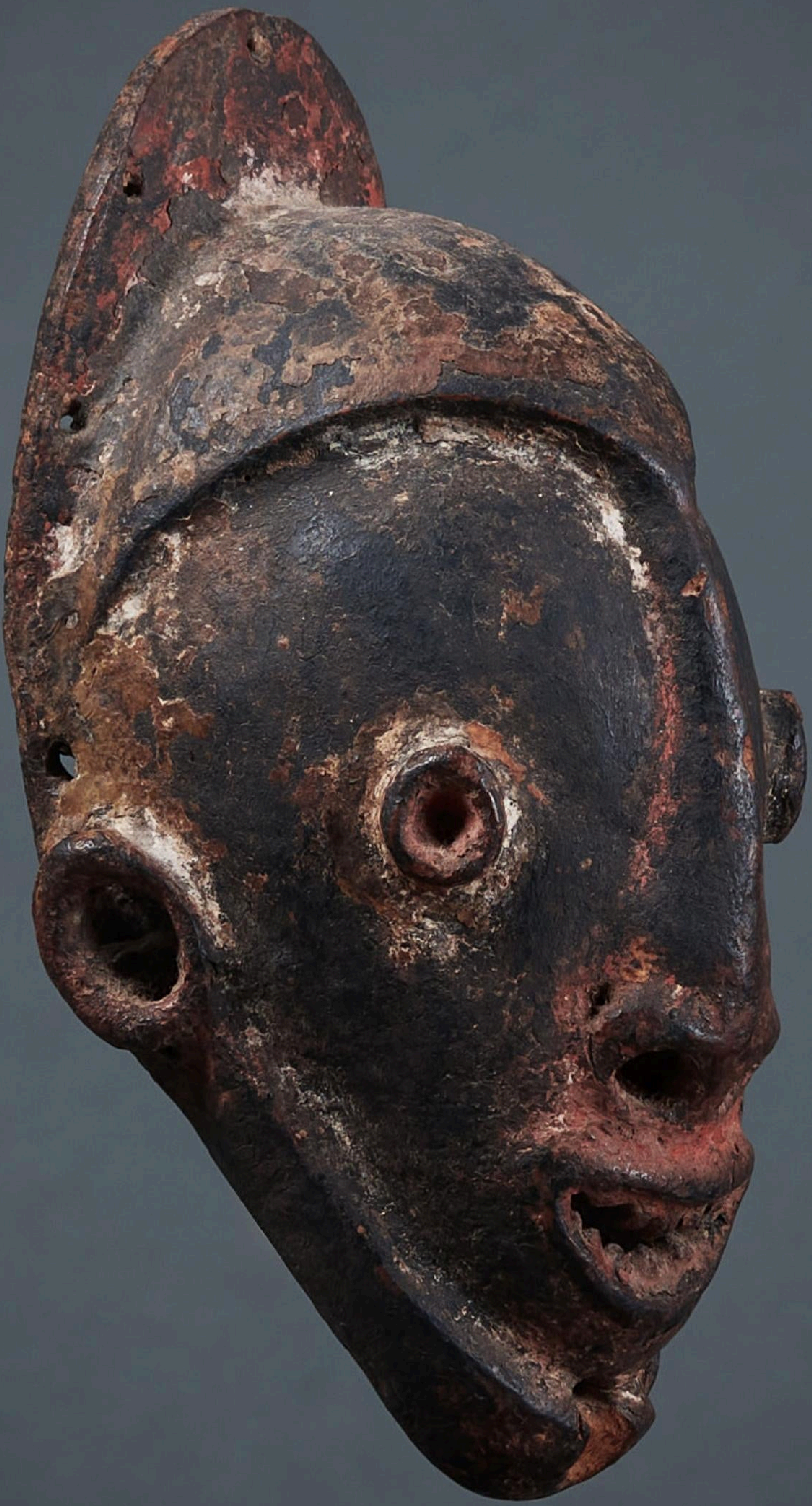
Ex-Michael Hamson, Palos Verdes; ex-Chris Boylan, Sydney: ex-important Hawaiian collection.

This shield, stone-carved and pre-contact, originates from the Wonenara region, at the headwaters of the Aziara River, close to the border of inland Morobe Province. This is a remote and isolated region, even today. Wonenara shields are invariably triangular in form with minor painted motifs or simply plain wood. This shield is quite extraordinary with a raised curved ridge across, showing strong red pigment above this ridge and traces of white below. The shield has a wonderful overall glossy patina.
The shield is carried during war on the shoulder with the strong woven cane sling, to protect the body's main organs from arrows and spears during tribal fighting.

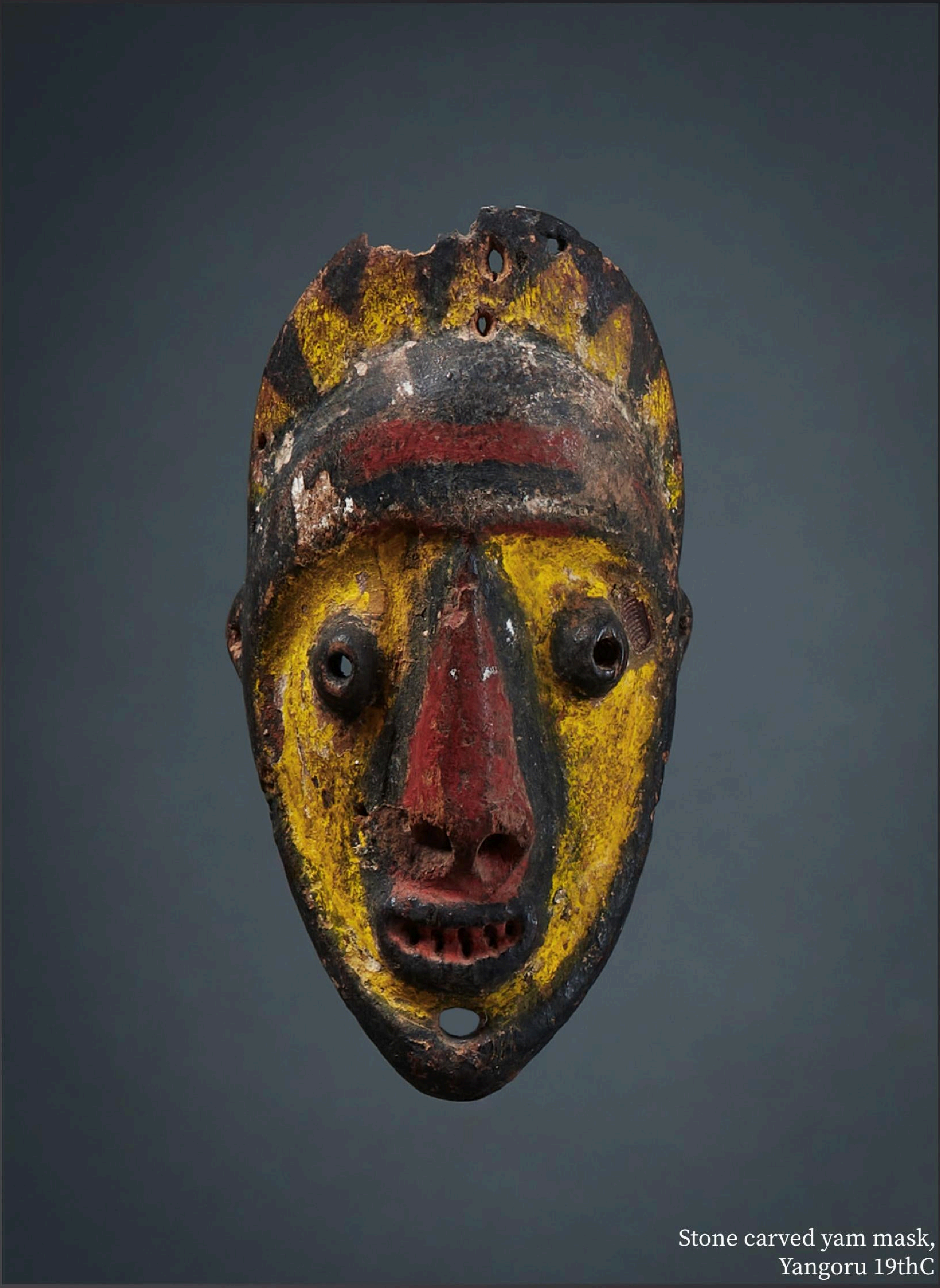
85 x 33 cm $ 6,000







Stone carved yam mask,
Yangoru, 19thC



Stone carved yam mask,
Yangoru 19thC

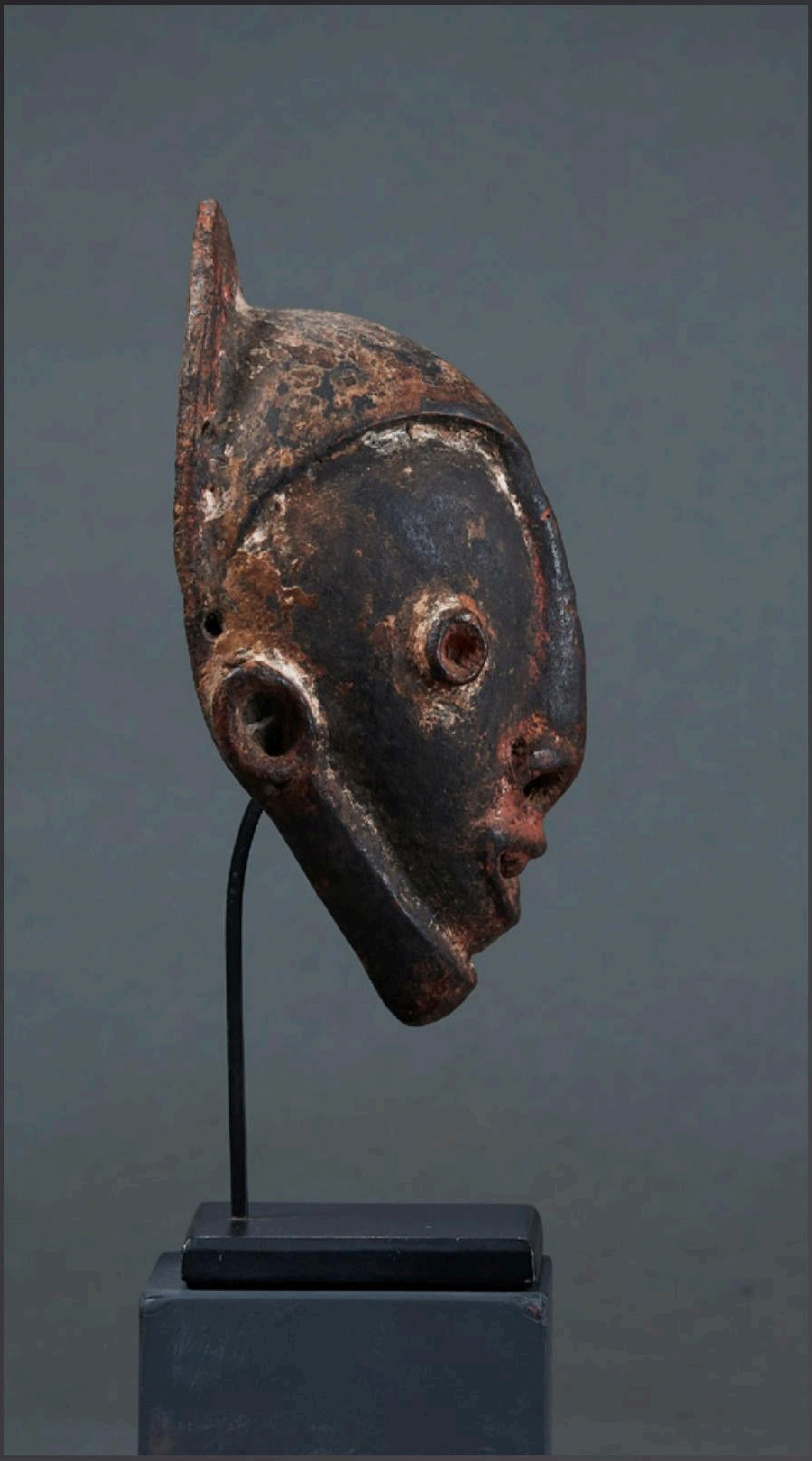
4. Wooden Yam Masks, Abelam, Prince Alexander Mountains, PNG

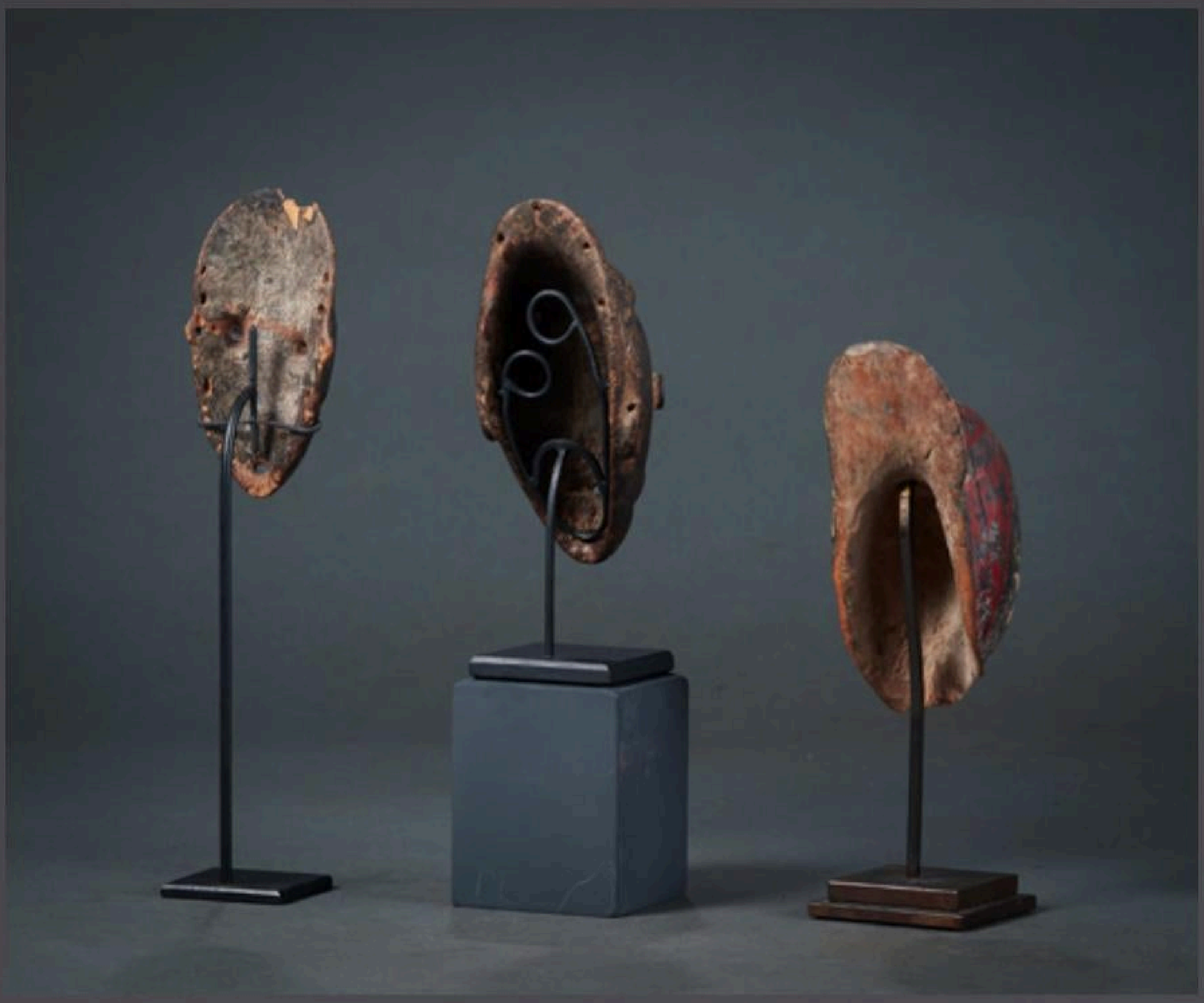
All three are wonderful examples of these small wooden yam masks, found only in the western regions of Abelam territory or their neighbours, the *Bukie*. The two on the left are ancient and stone-carved; the one on the right probably also stone-carved, but more recent.

a) A tiny and fine yam mask, with the back showing its true ancient age. The front is still painted in the bright colours of ceremony. Collected by Ed Boylan circa 1972 in the Yangoru area and it remained in his private collection til recently.
14 x 7.5 x 4 POA

b) This mask is superb; one of the best I have ever seen, and certainly the best owned. It has a fluid form and deep delicate carving that only a master carver could achieve. It has pierced eyes, septum and mouth (which also has barred teeth) Collected by Geoff Liversidge directly from the owner in 1989; ex-coll Lesley Martin, California; since 1990 in private collection of Chris Boylan.
17 x 9 x 8 POA

c) An almost spherical form, with subtle paintwork and a glossy over-all patina. Collected by Mike Hamson, Palos Verdes; private collection Chris Boylan.
19 x 8 x 8 POA

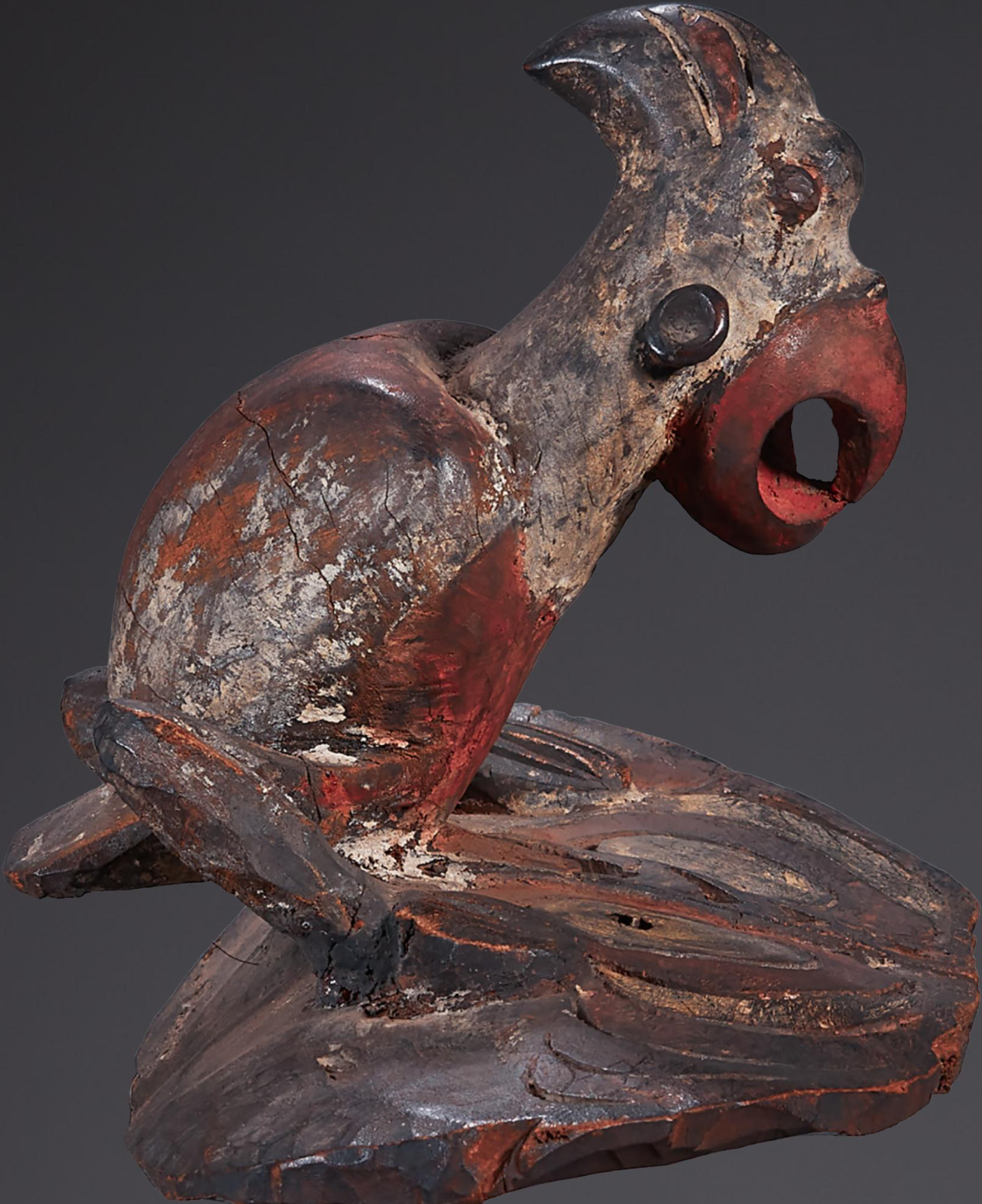




5. Figure of a Cockatoo, Abelam, East Sepik, PNG

This is a wonderfully carved bird figure depicting a clan totem, the cockatoo. It has an extraordinary double visage, only visible as one moves around the figure, with one head facing forwards and one backwards. It is an enigmatic object; the only viable explanation to me is that it was once part of a *Haus Tambaran* lintel. The bird figure has acquired a good patina over time.
It seems to have been a revered heirloom.
Ex-collection Tom Arthur, Sydney, Australia. He acquired it from Galleries Primitif, Sydney, in the 1970s.

19 x 35 x 18 cm $ 3,500

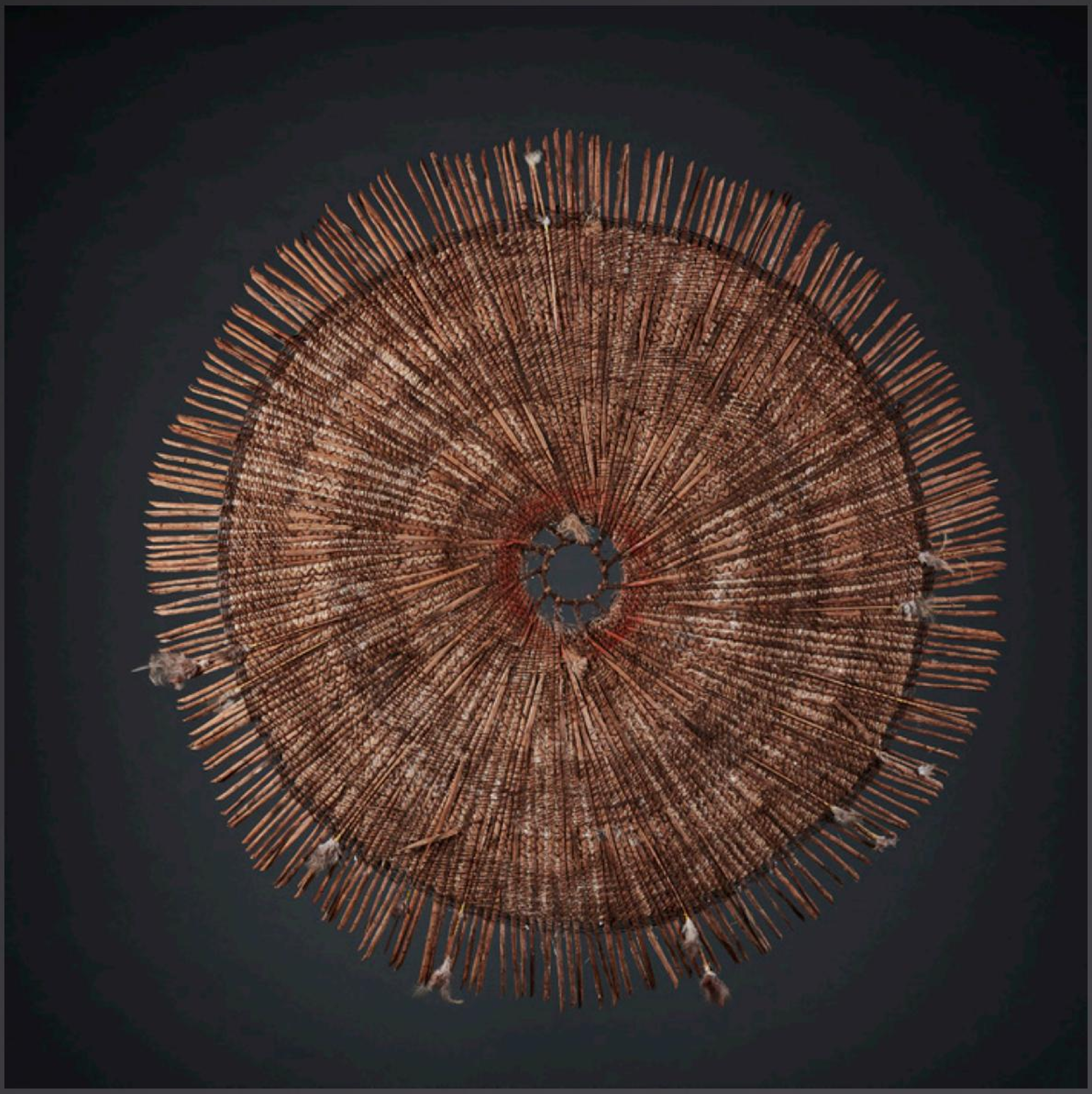


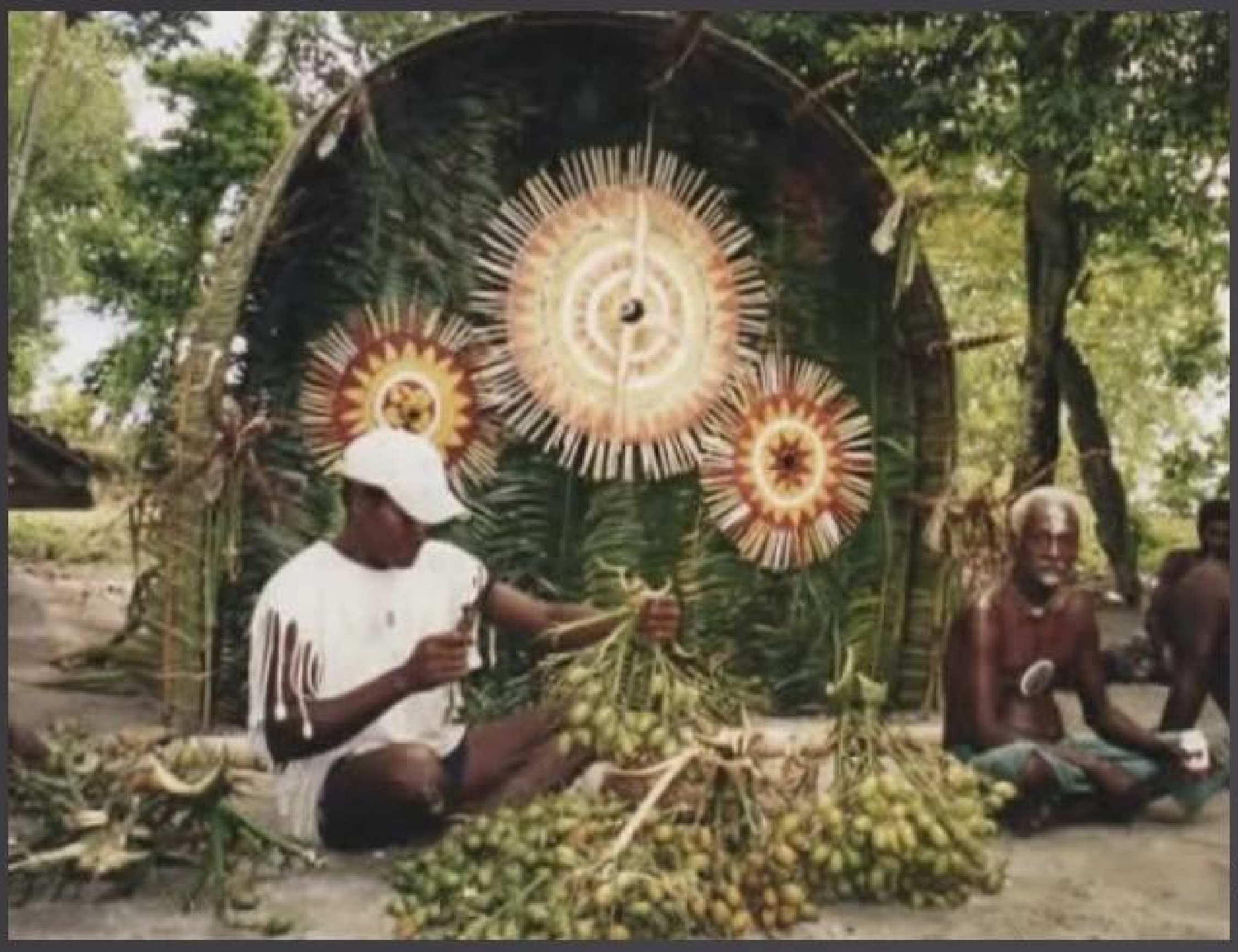
6. Vavara Woven Funeral Object, Northern New Ireland Province, PNG

These woven discs, known as vavara, are completely different to other *malagan* ceremonial objects, with much greater taboo and secrecy. They were first recorded by Ludwig Kramer in the 1909 German expedition who described them as ‘sun discs’. However, they are based on a spider web and considered powerful and dangerous. The *vavara* long ago came to be made when a woman saw it in a dream, as a way to honour a female deceased. The *vavara* malagan ceremony commemorates only the female dead and males who die prior to initiation. They are powerful objects. It was believed that sorcerers could use the power of the *vavara* to kill, hence owners would burn it the same night after use (unless sold to a foreigner and immediately removed). It was important to burn them in calm conditions, as even the smoke was potent, and it would go straight up.

Collected by David Baker on a small Tabar Island in the early 1990s, immediately after a malagan ceremony. It was in his collection until after his death in 2009.

133 cm (diameter) $ 4,000





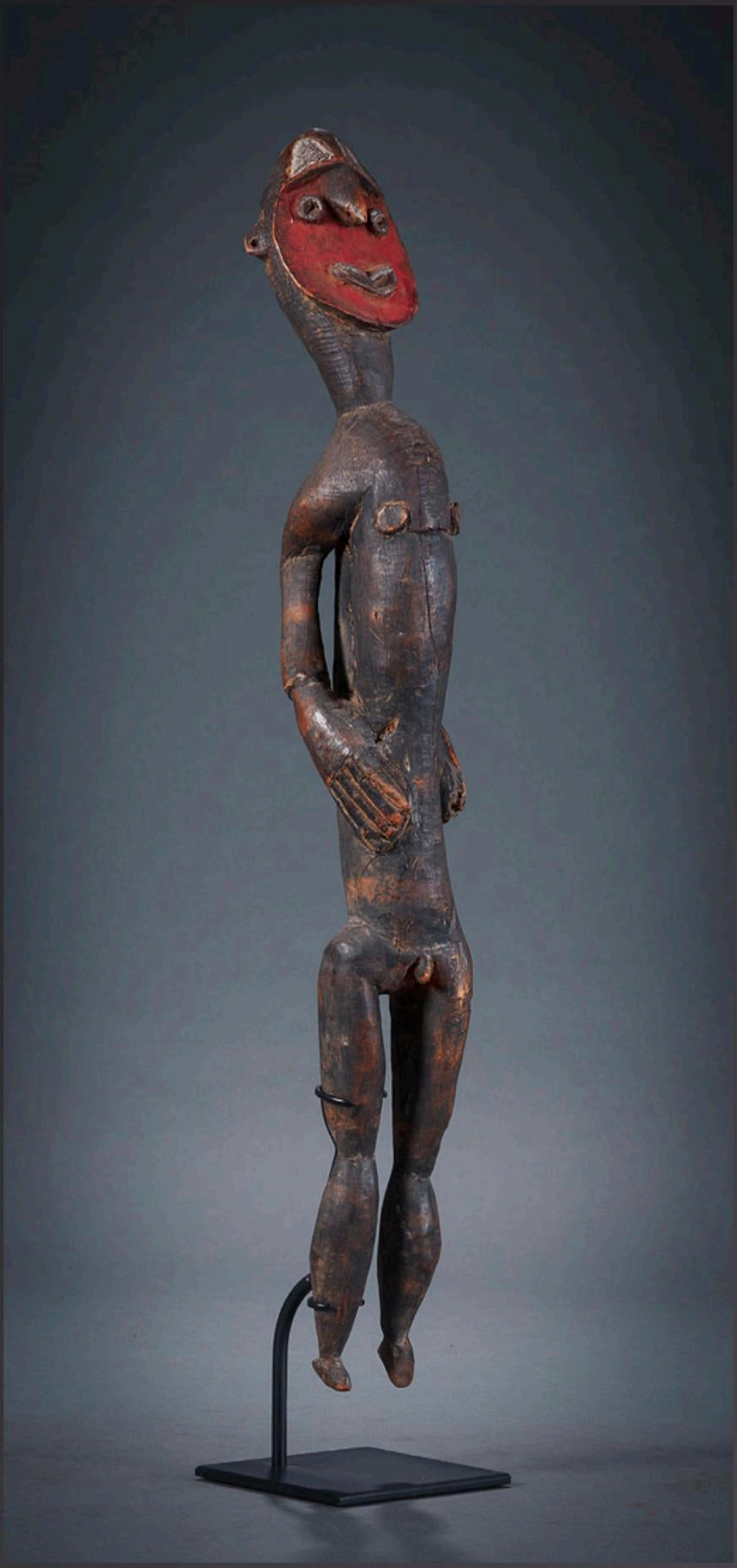
Vavara disc at Malagan ceremony, Tabar Is, New Ireland.
Photo: Barry Craig 2002.

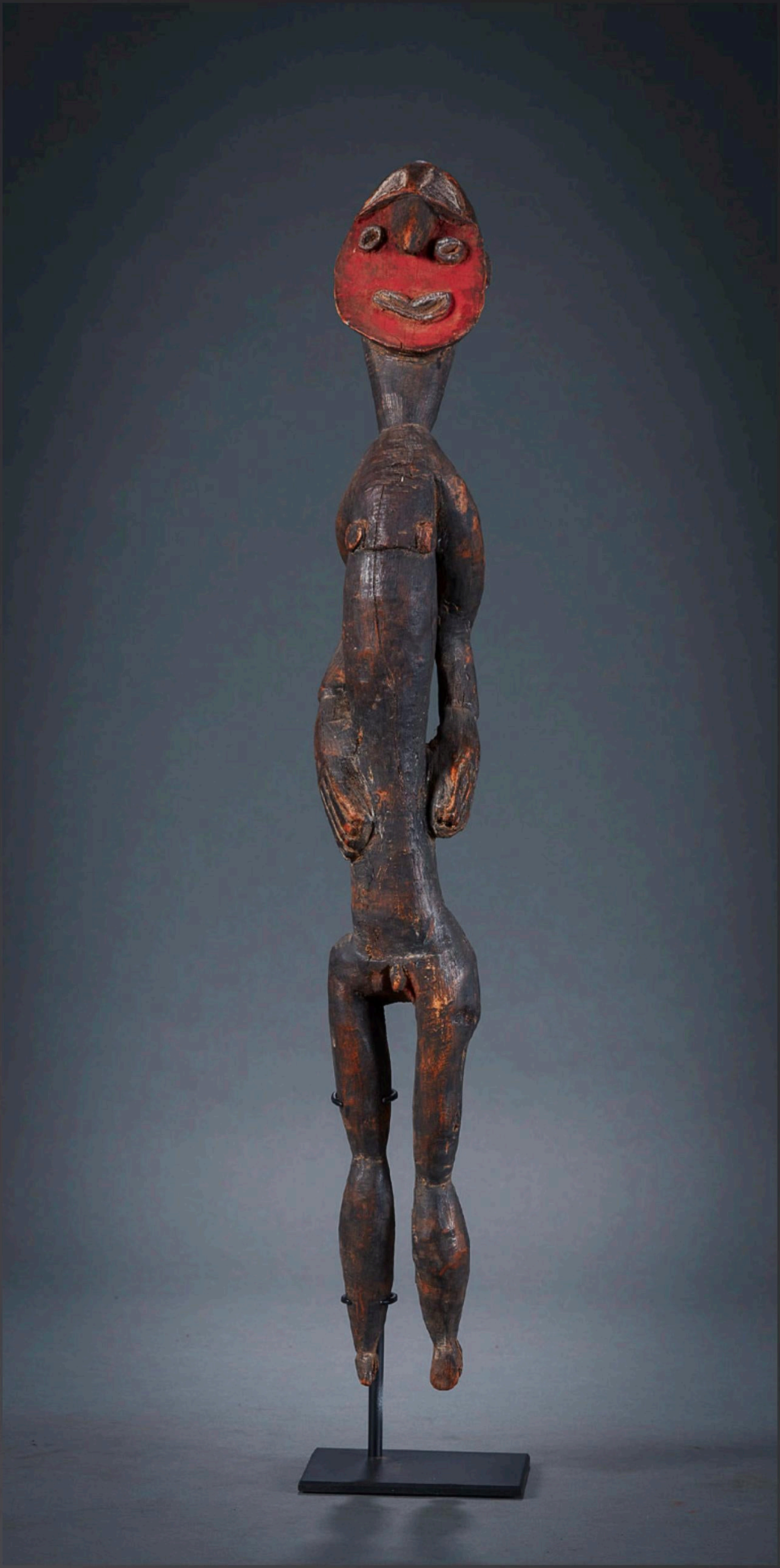
7. Female Figure, Nukuma People, Washkuk Hills, Upper Sepik River, PNG

This *nogwi* figure has a wonderful twisted form, with the head thrown back and upwards. The figure is 'alive' in a way that is rarely found; it is obviously the handwork of a master-carver. These figures are central to the last harvest ceremony of the Nukuma people of the Washkuk Hills, and the ceremony is also called *nogwi*. It is the final and most sacred of three post-harvest ceremonies and the only one to feature a female figure. Women are totally excluded from any involvement. The figure is old and has an unknown collection date.

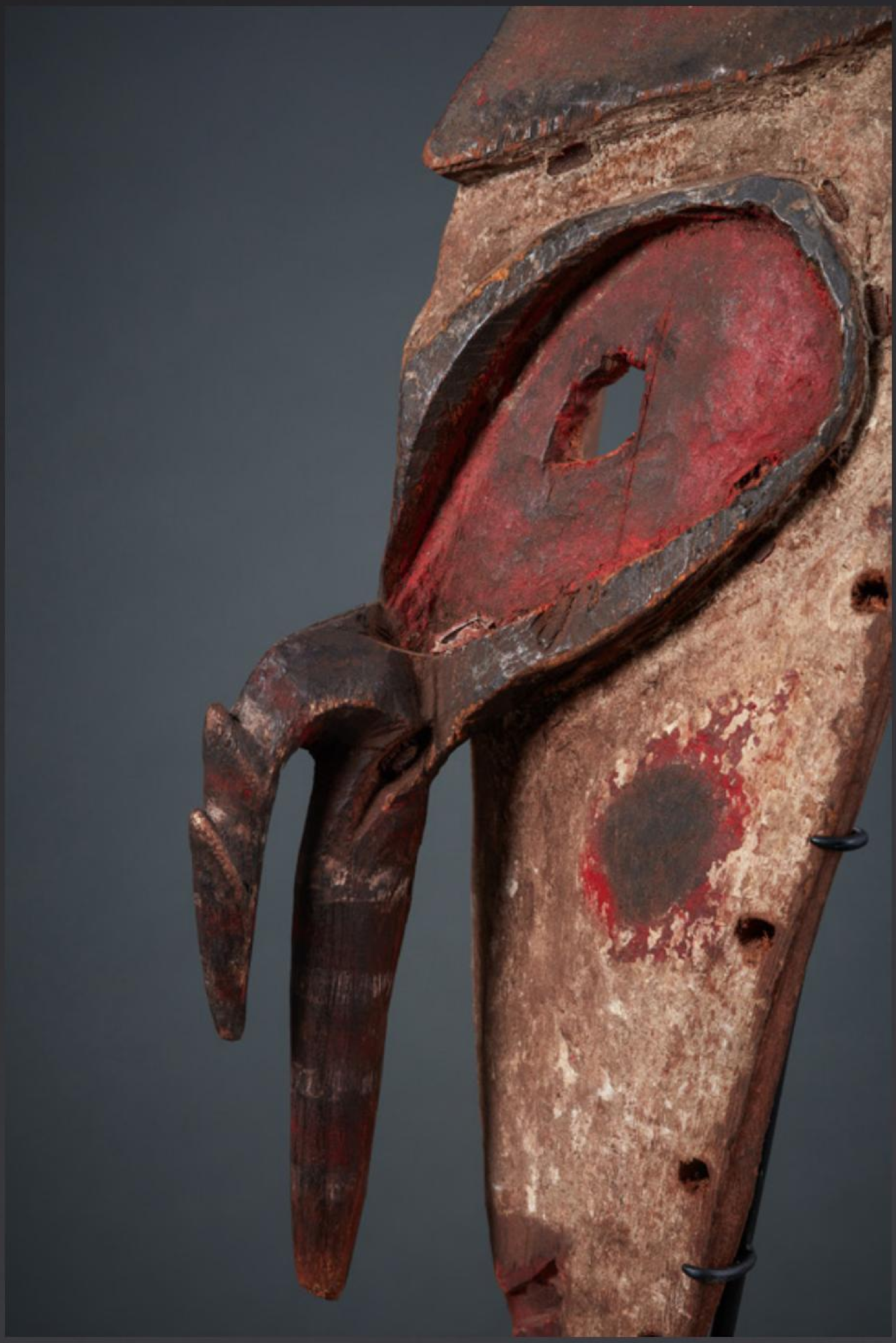
Ex-collection Frank Hodgkinson (1919-2001), artist and writer. It has been in the collection in Sydney for around 60 years.

87 x 9 x 11 cm $ 4,000





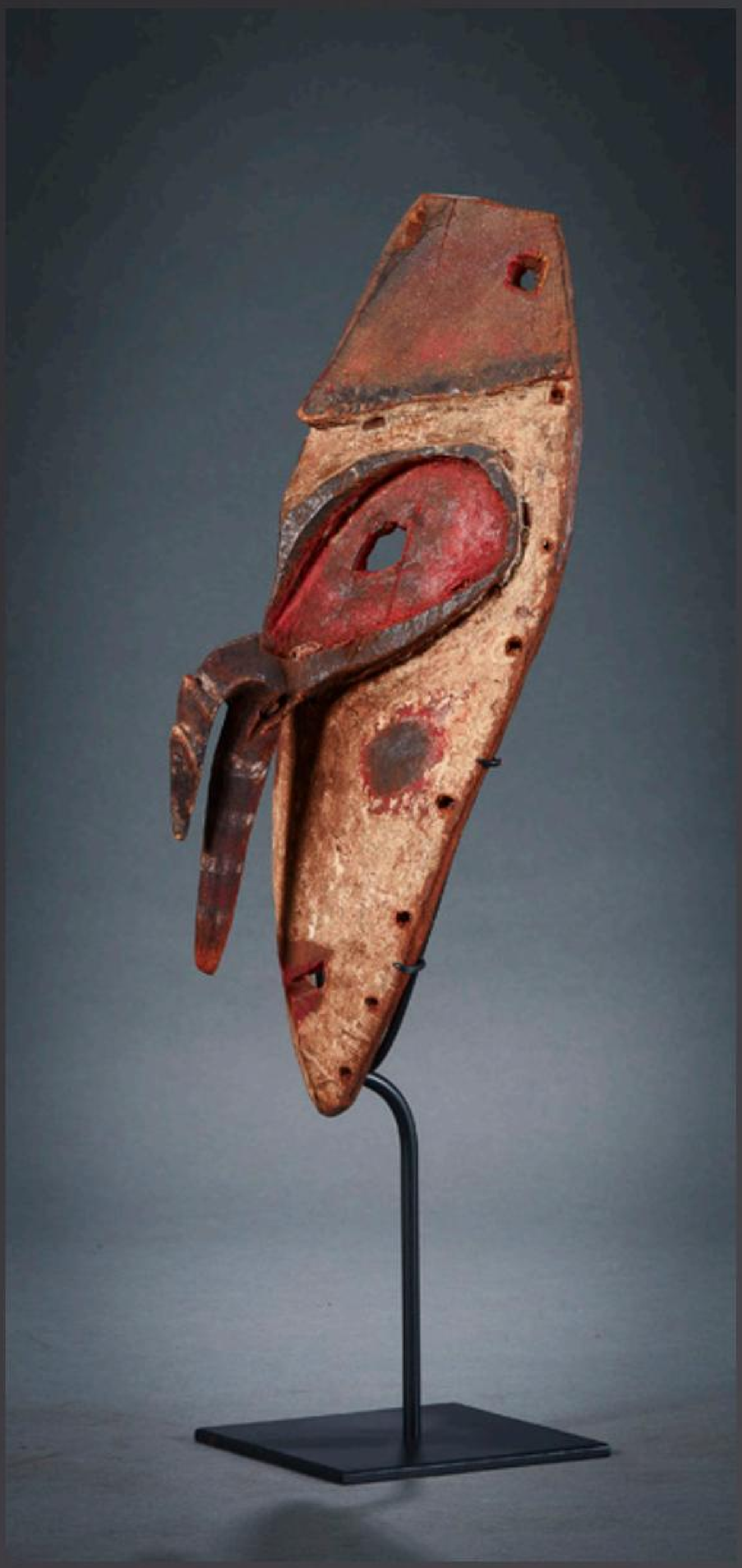
8. Dance Mask, Yuat River, Lower Sepik River, PNG, 19th/early 20thC

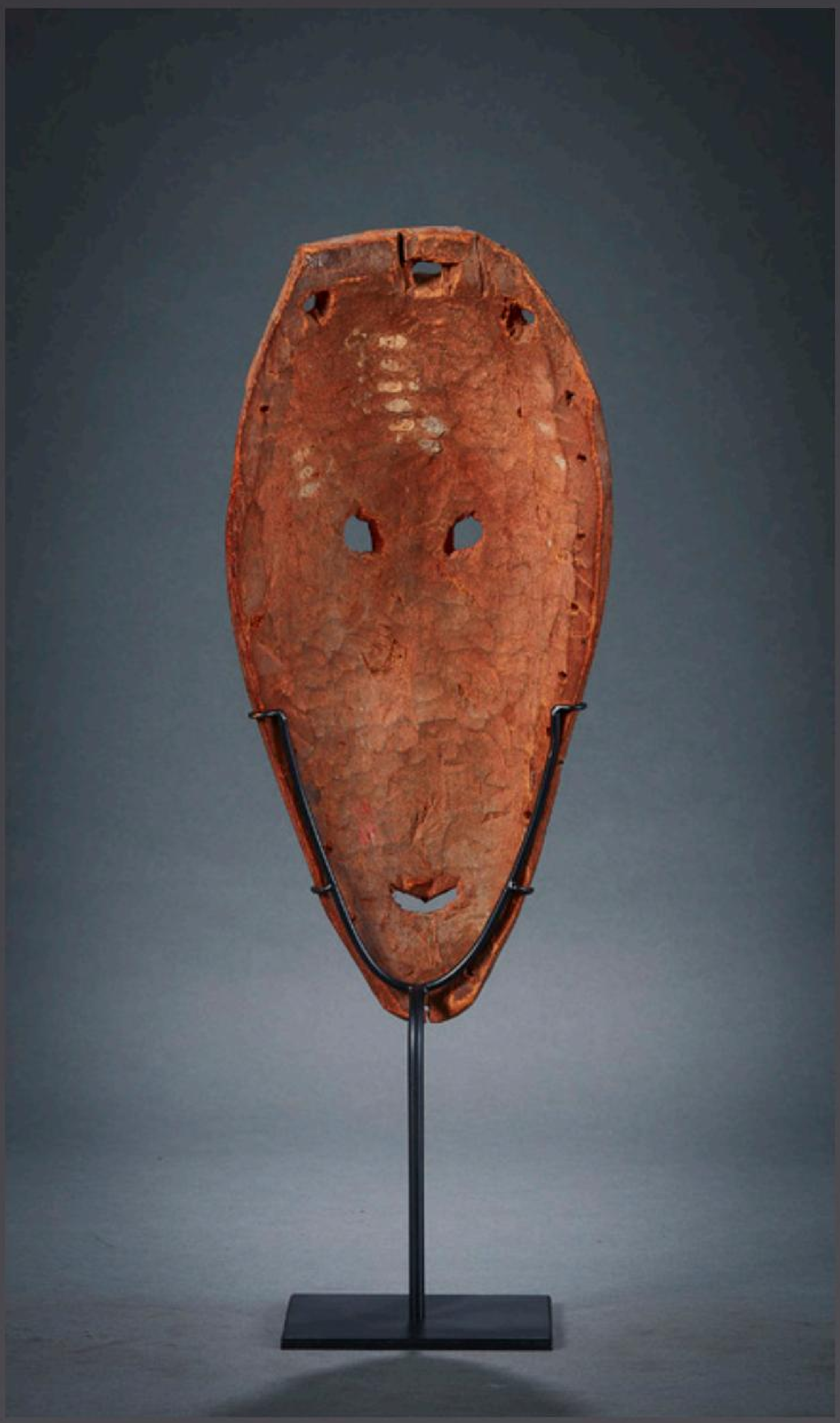


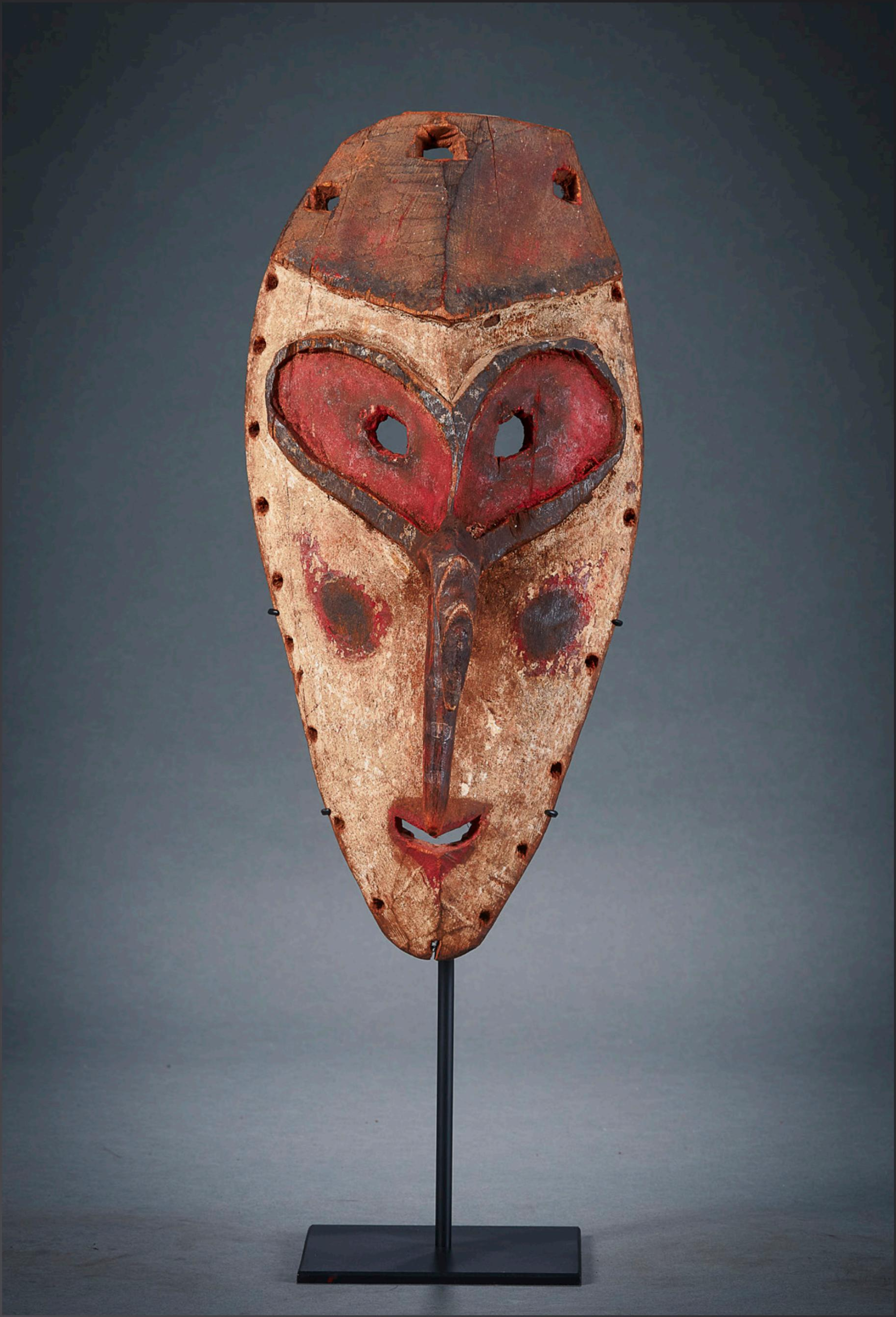
This is a fine old mask with a raw energy and many layers of different paints. The visage is strong, with a heavy brow, pierced eyes surrounded by red, a double-tiered nose and small mouth near the sharp, triangular chin. Many holes surround the mask edge. One side of the mask was broken and it has been village repaired (rusty nails and resin extant). The mask is old and well used but not stone-carved.

Ex-collection Ed Boylan, Cairns, Australia who owned this mask for more than 40 years. He acquired it in Brisbane from a small collection and the mask was said to have been collected by Rev. Albert Lambton (1887-1979), an Australian missionary stationed at Dogura, PNG, from 1923 to 1937.

42 x 20 x 9.5 cm POA







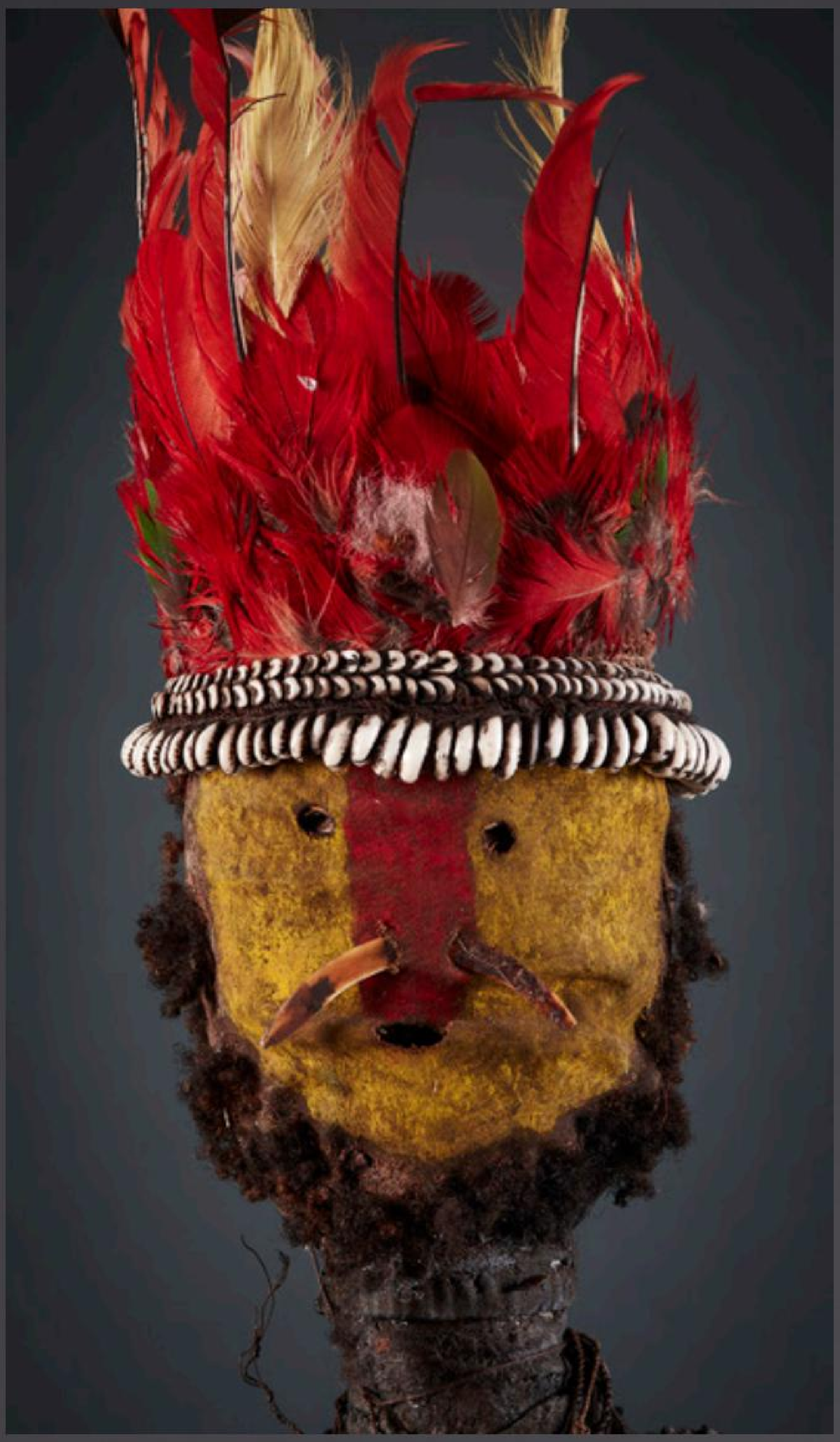
9. Ritual Dance Figure, Wahgi Valley, Western Highlands, PNG, mid-20thC

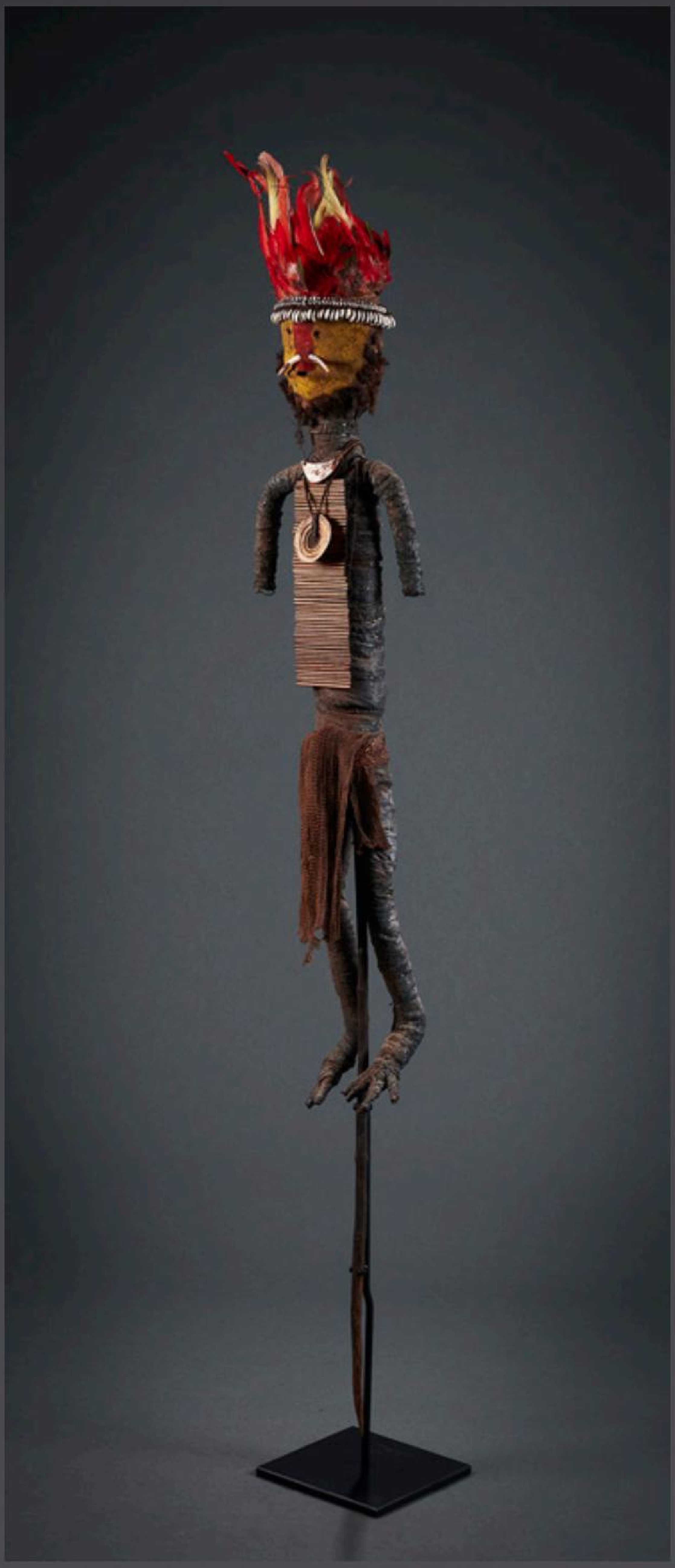
These tall figures mounted on a carrying stick are known as *bolimboku*. They are made for important ceremonial gatherings that attract large groups of politically allied clans, including men, women and children. The central theme entails the killing of many pigs, often hundreds. The *bolimboku* appear at the crucial part of the ceremony, immediately before the pig killing. Men with these figures, and others sometimes wearing gourd masks, are hidden behind a high fence. They break through the fence and onto the dance ground with these figures carried by dancers on their backs, or in wide bark belts. The figures are decorated in similar ways to the dancers themselves; with feather headdress, shell body ornaments, and painted faces in bright colours.

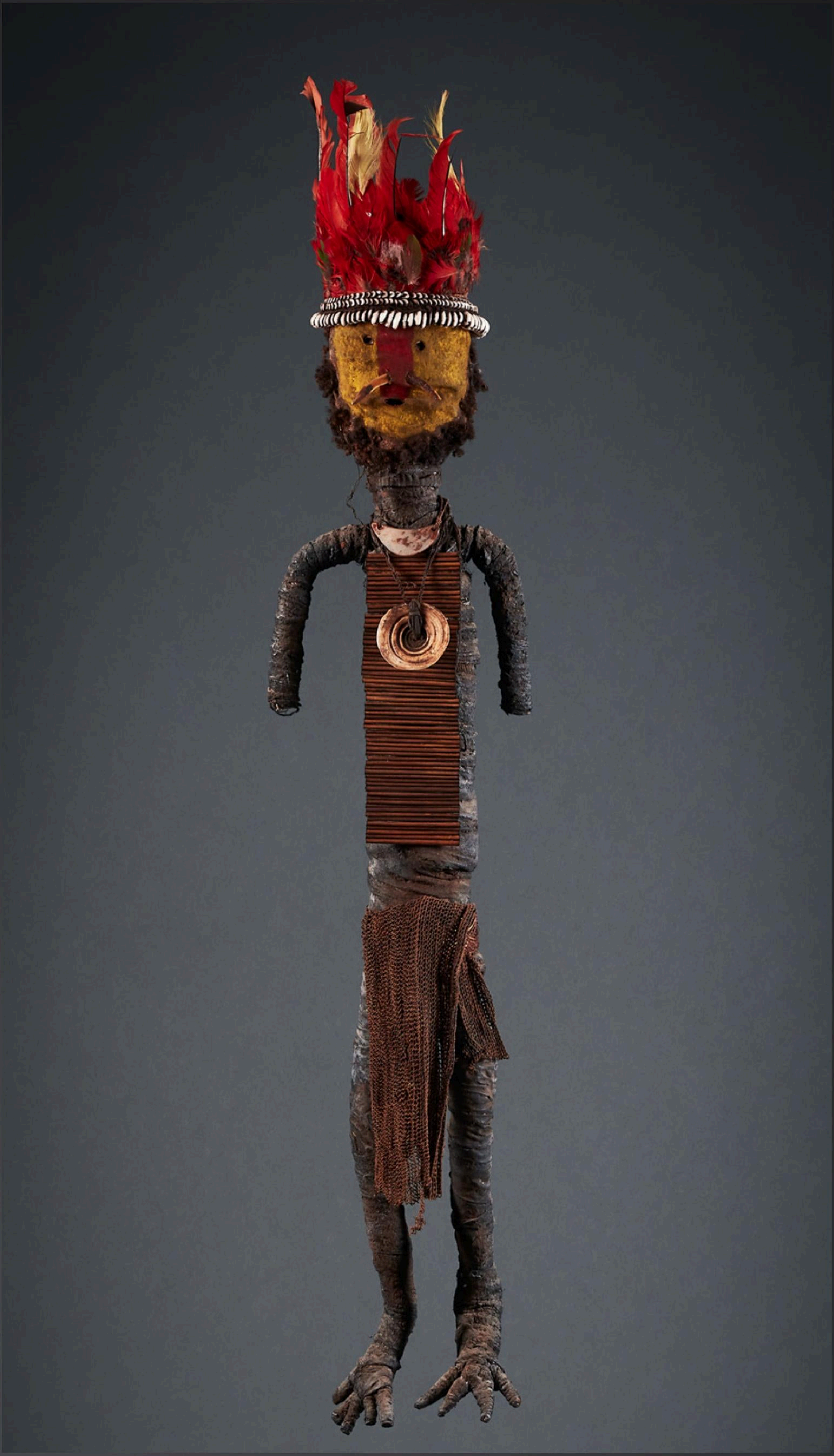
This Highland figure is similar to those collected by Stan Moriarty in the 1960s (now in AGNSW collection) and two in the famous 'seized collection' of 1972 (now in PNG National Museum). Without doubt, this is of similar age (1960s-early 1970s) and is well preserved, unlike some others of the time. The figures were used only once, with the owners keeping feathers and shell ornaments. The face is made of a cotton cloth, painted red and yellow, but it seems all other materials are natural and traditional.

The figure was brought back to Australia in pre-Independence times (before 1975) and was preserved in a collection in Melbourne, Australia, until recently.

155 x 24 x 16 cm $ 4,800



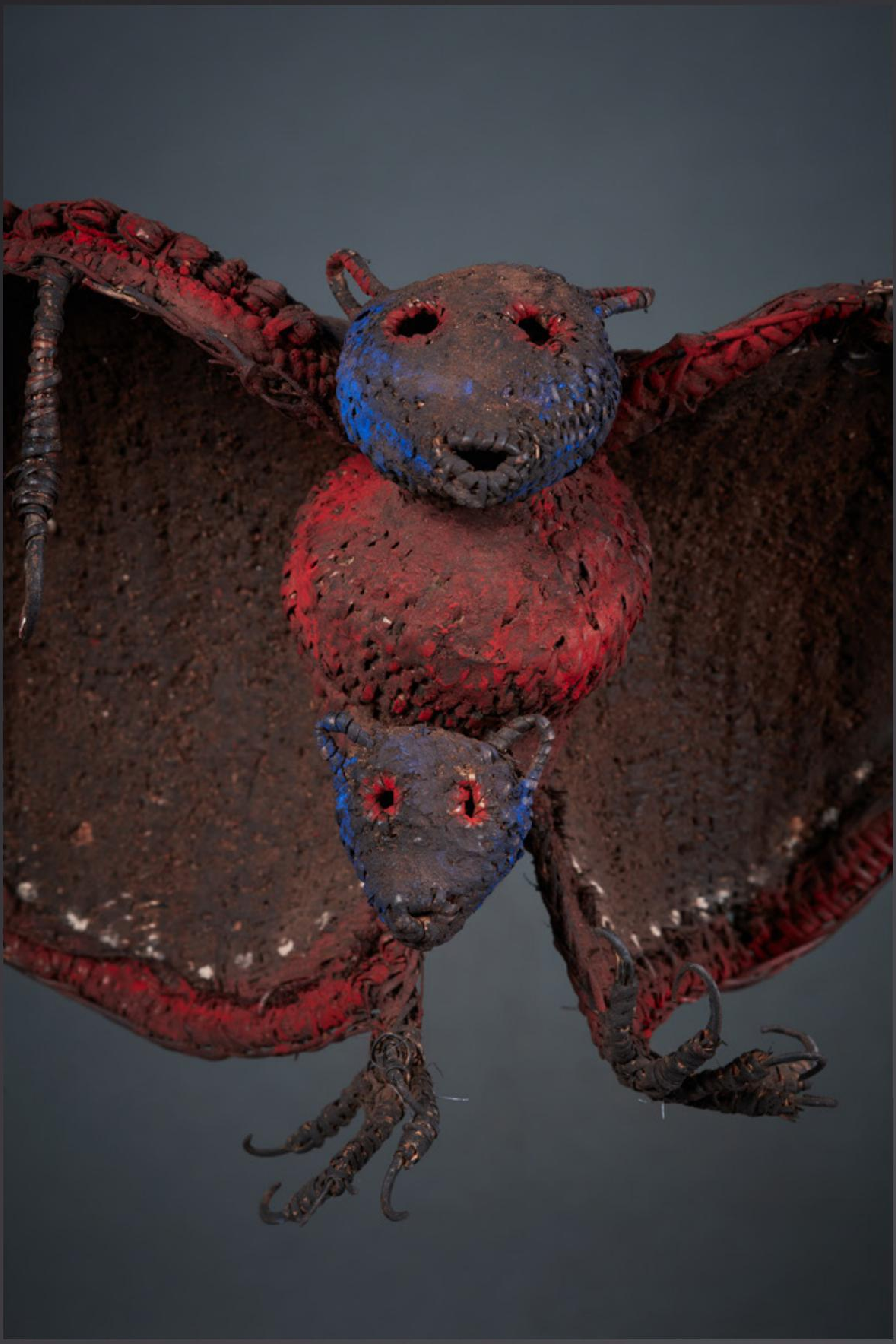




10. Woven Bat Figure, Abelam, Sepik Plains, PNG

This woven bat figure, with a baby's head protruding from its pouch, is an exceptional and dynamic piece made with the most amazing detail. Animal forms, especially birds, are used in all Abelam ceremonies as representation of clan totems. The weaving and detailing of this woven bat is superb, obviously by a master-craftsman. The wings are wide and curve
sinuously giving them an energetic rounded form suggesting flight. The claws on the feet and the wings use the real claws from this bat (which is also a favourite food in the Sepik region).
It depicts the largest bat in Melanesia, the Great Flying Fox (Pteropus neohibernicus).Such figures may be displayed on the front of the *Haus Tambaran*, protected under the eaves; or more likely inside the *Haus Tambaran,* as part of the initiation scene.
This figure was collected in the early 1970s by a teacher at Maprik High School. It was in the southern Abelam region, Wosera, and most probably Wombisa village.

23 x 39 x 18 cm **$ 3,800**

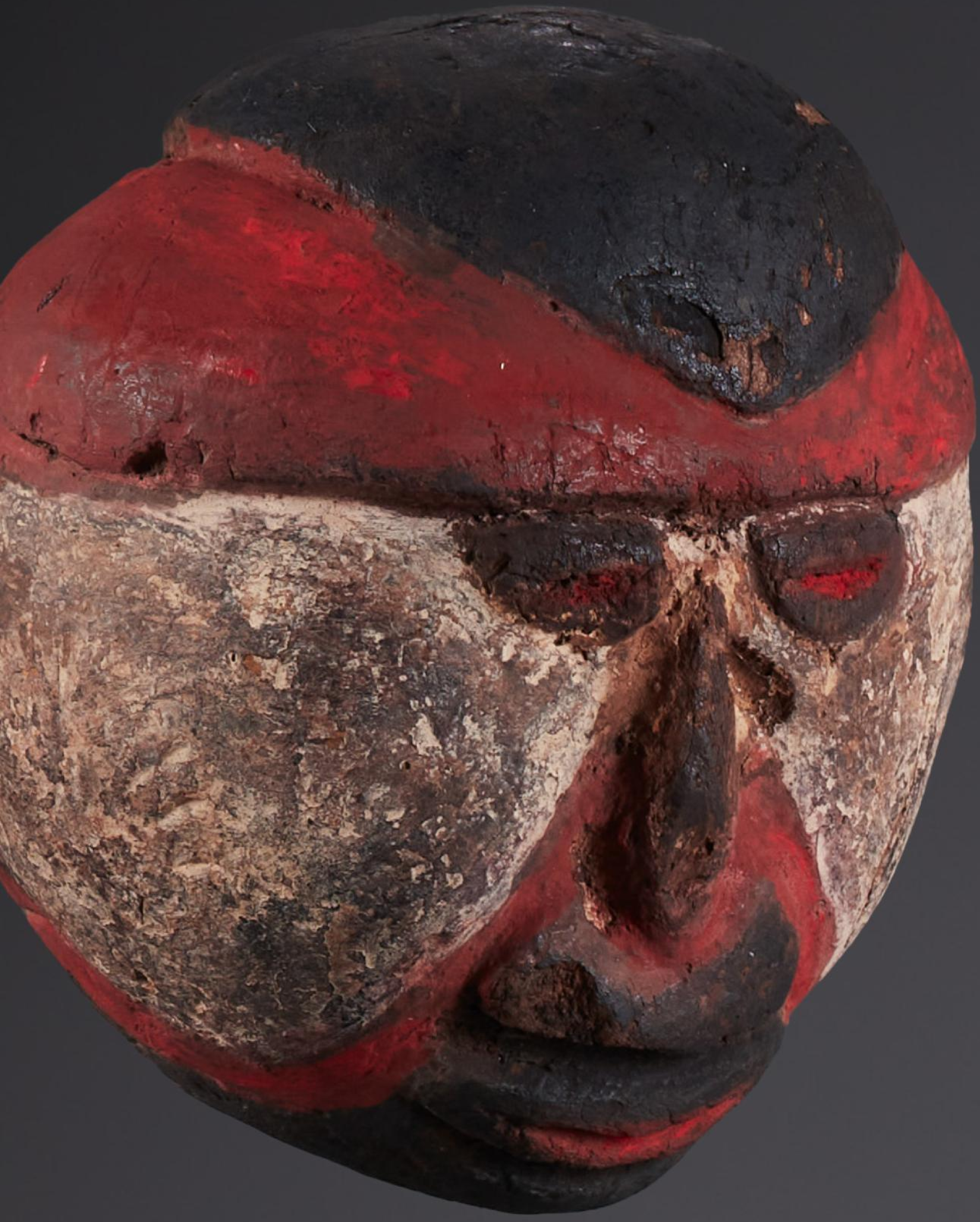


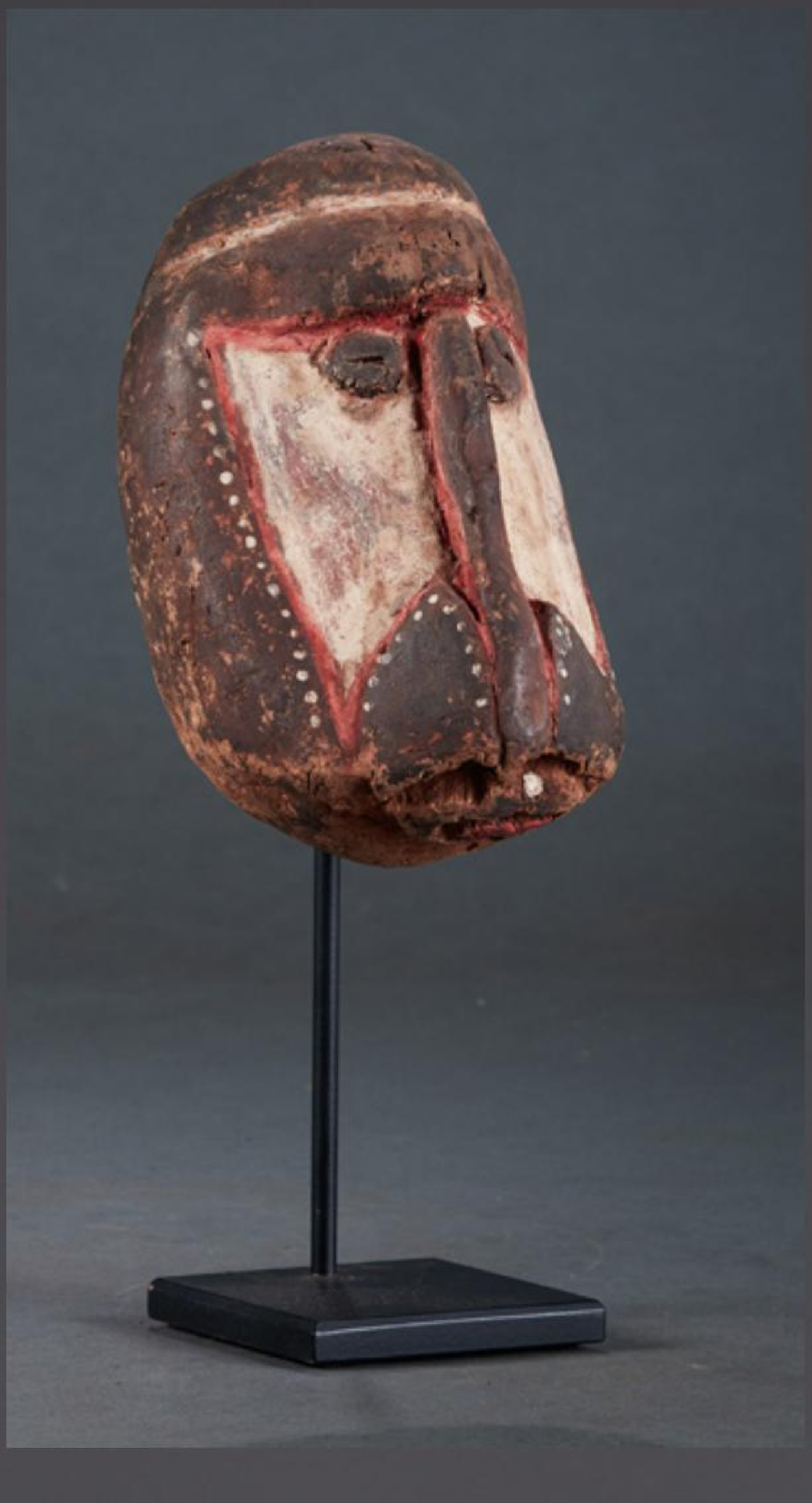
11. Balsa Wood Yam Masks, Wosera, Southern Abelam, PNG

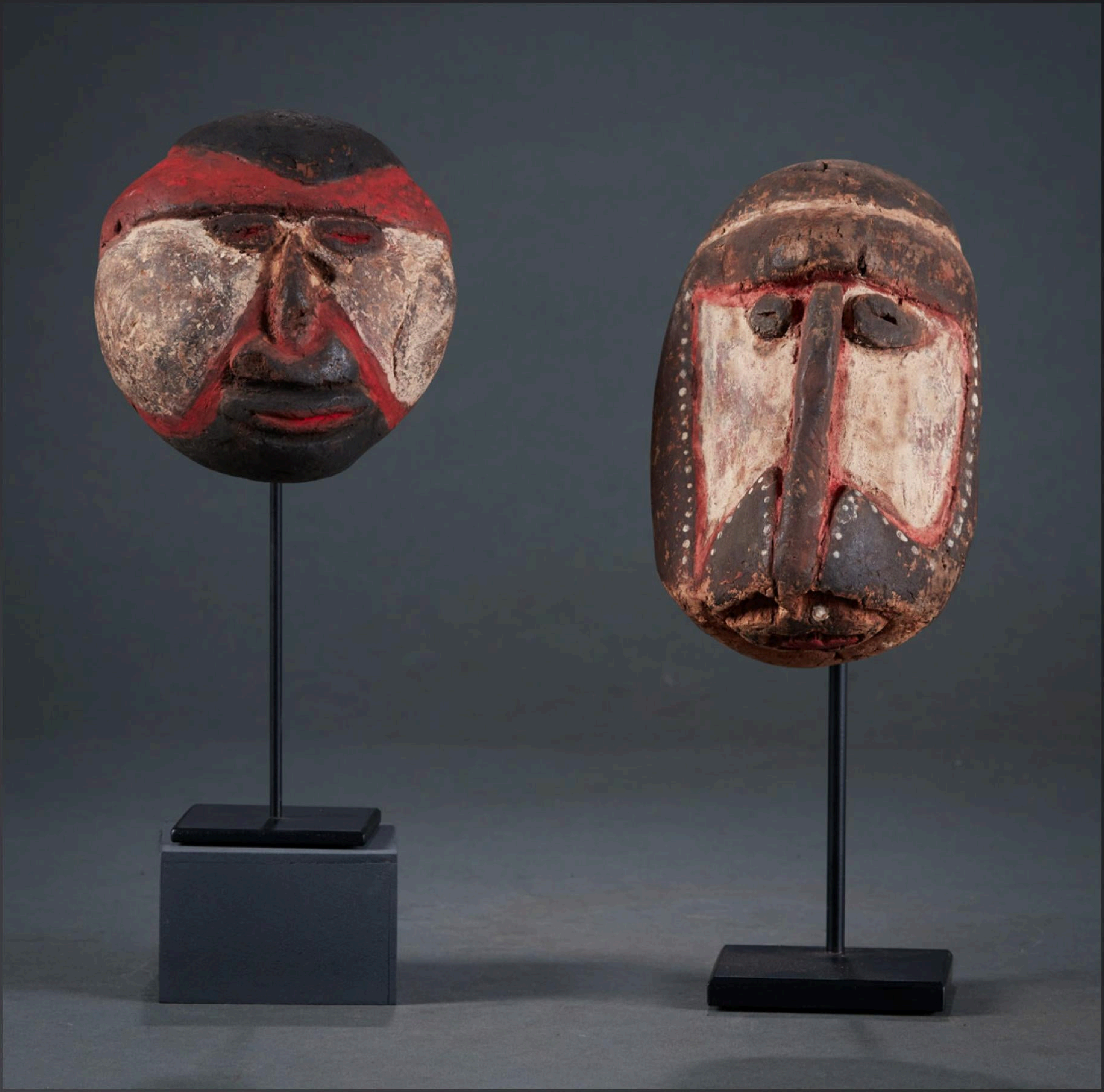
Both yam masks were collected in the 1960s by Ron and Barbara Perry. The Abelam was a favourite destination for their collecting trips to PNG. And later, Barabara had an amazing collection of Abelam art at her home in Sydney. The balsa yam masks are not as common as the woven type and have their own robust aesthetic.

a) Almost spherical in form, with a loop at the back for attaching to the yam. Painted mainly in red, black and white.
13 x 12 x 10 cm $ 800

b) More rounded-rectangular in form, with a similar loop at the back for attachment to the yam. The colours are more subtle being a pale orange with white and black highlights.
18 x 11 x 10 cm $ 700







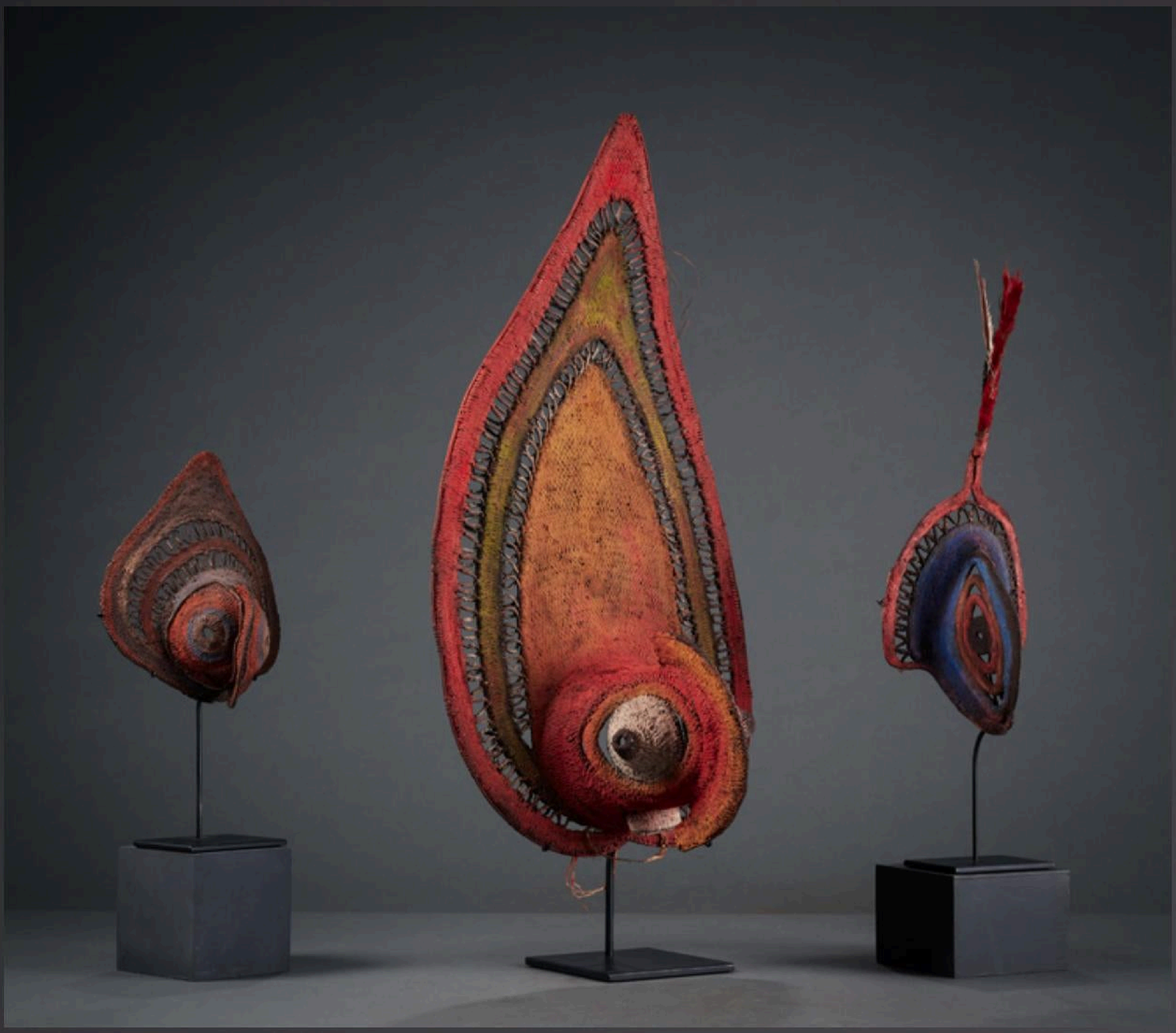
12. Three Old Yam Masks, Abelam people, PNG

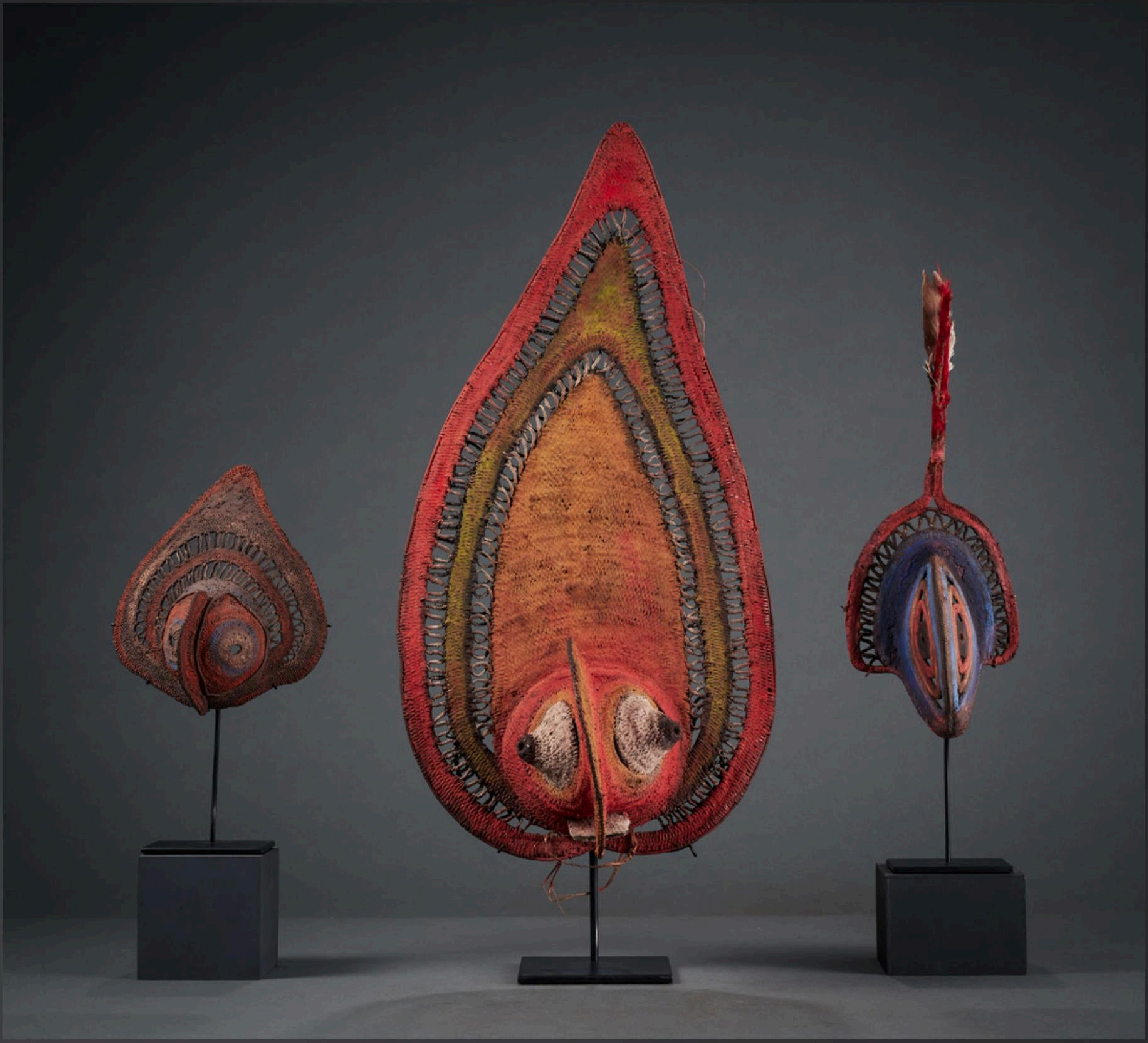
All three yam masks are woven from fine cane and show paint levels that suggest they have been repainted many times. Each harvest ceremony, when the large yams are lined up and decorated, these brightly painted woven masks are attached, together with some shell finery, feathers and colourful leaves. The yam lining ceremony (rarely seen today) was important to foster fertility for the proceeding season. Spiritual support was always essential in every aspect of life.

a) A fine old mask, with semi-spherical face, round white eyes and subtle orange coloration.
28 x 23 cm $ 800

b) A very large yam mask, finely woven with a wonderful asymmetry of form. The coloration is superb, with traditional orange, yellow and white then the introduction of an unusual green.
76 x 39 x 23 cm $ 1,400

c) A fine vertical yam mask, with tall feather attachment of eagle and parrot feathers. The narrow, bird-like face is coloured in mainly blue and pink pigments.
51 x 17 cm $ 950

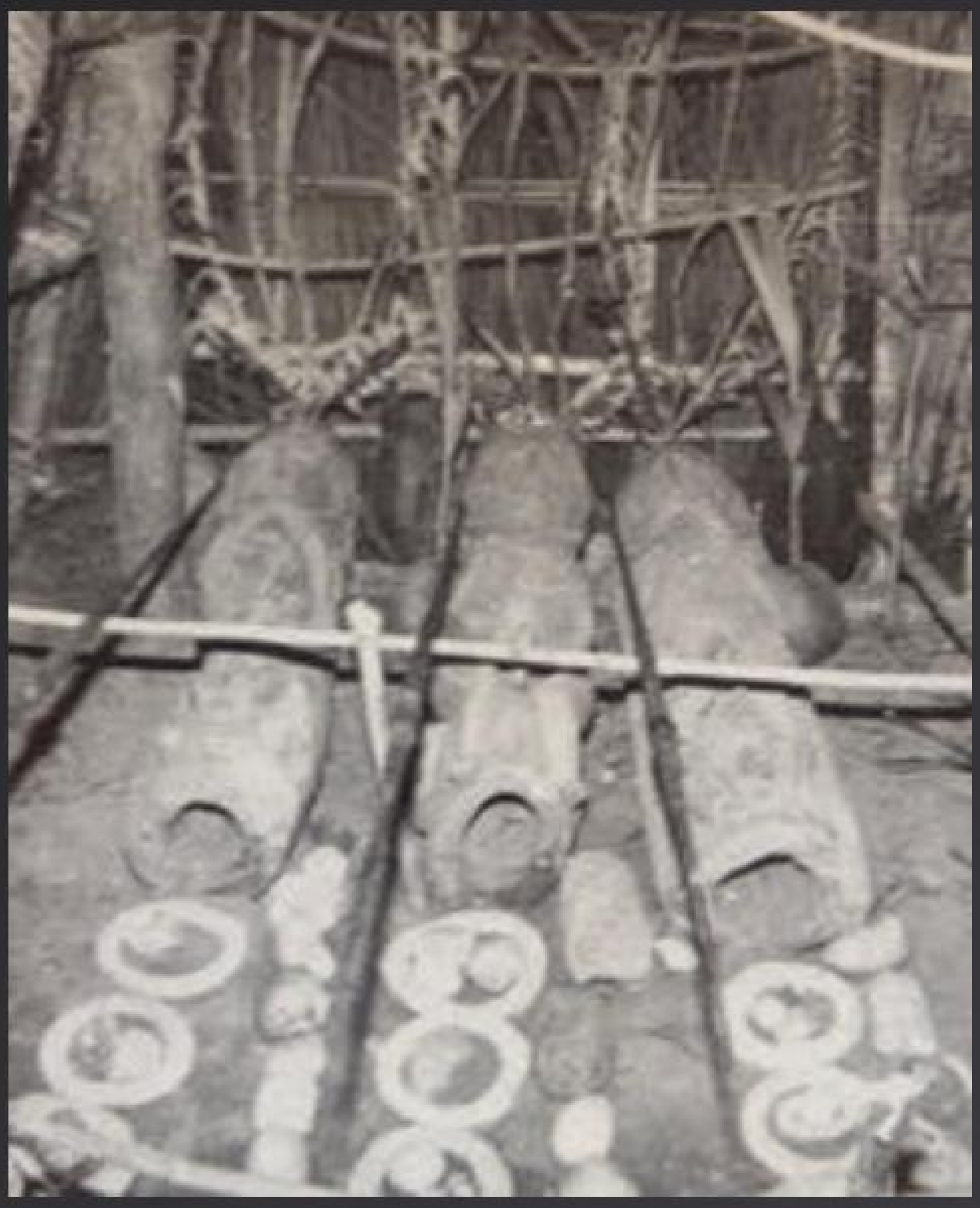




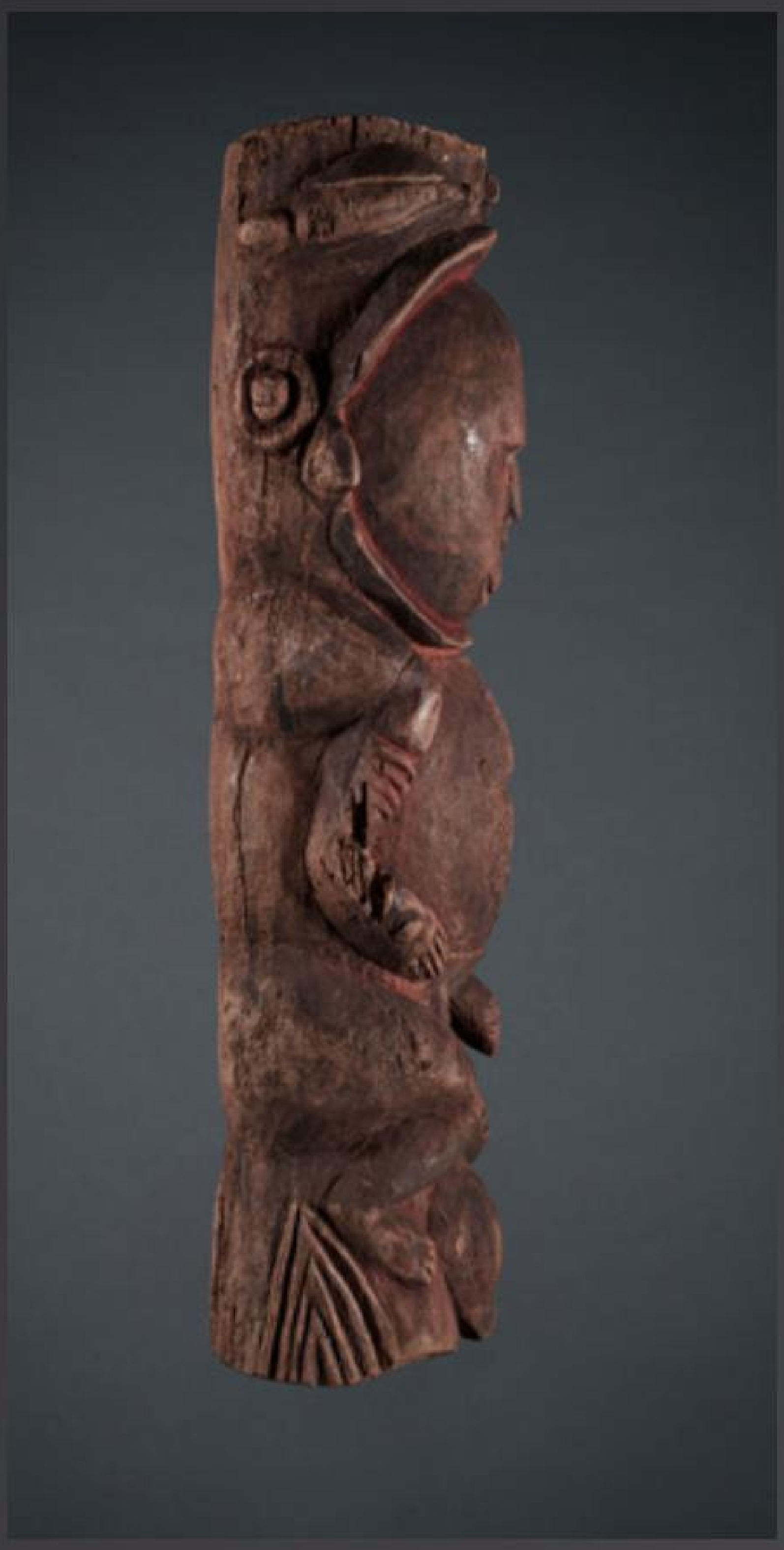
13. Flute Resonator, *Urungwall*, Abelam people, Prince Alexander Ranges, PNG
Collected by a teacher at a local school in the Abelam region.
Circa 1920s – 1930s.

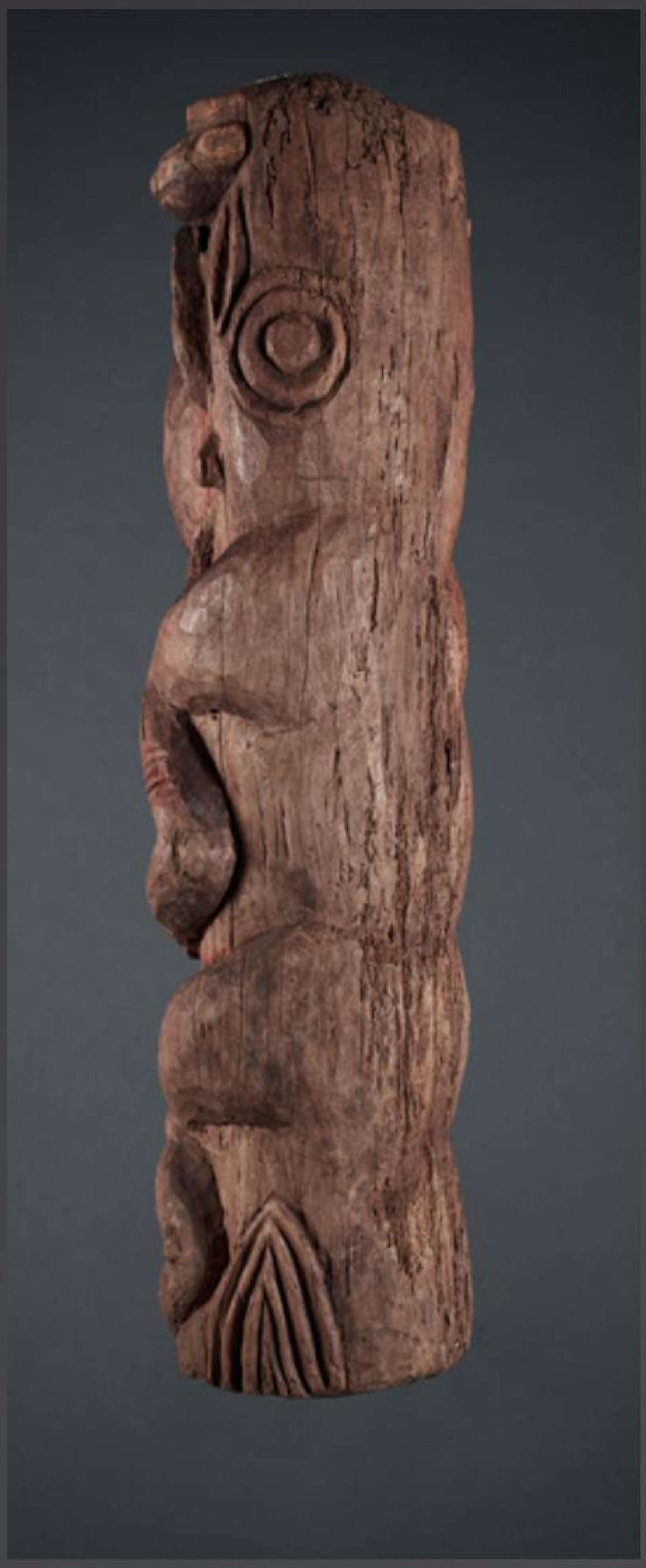
These hollow wooden cylindrical forms, called *urungwall* in the Abelam language, are rare. They are used only during important ceremonial festivals, especially during initiation ceremony when men play the sacred flutes. A flute is played into the hollow of the cavity resonator which greatly enhances the intensity of the music. The *urungwall* is used mainly inside the *Haus Tambaran* (Spirit House). On occasions, when the women and children are chased away, it was sometimes carried in procession through the village by 3 or 4 men with the flute player following behind. The resonator was rubbed with salat leaves and magic stones to "awaken" it. The remarkable aspect of this *urungwall* is the full length, 3-dimensional figure carved on its front, depicting an important ancestor generally referred to as *nngwalndu*. The figure has traces of paint remaining. Its sinuous form, with curvilinear legs and arms, a strong semi-spherical face and detailed motifs, is truly a masterpiece. Wear and tear from long use is evidenced at the top and bottom and also on the back, where it has most probably lain on the earthen floor inside the *Haus Tambaran* for many years.

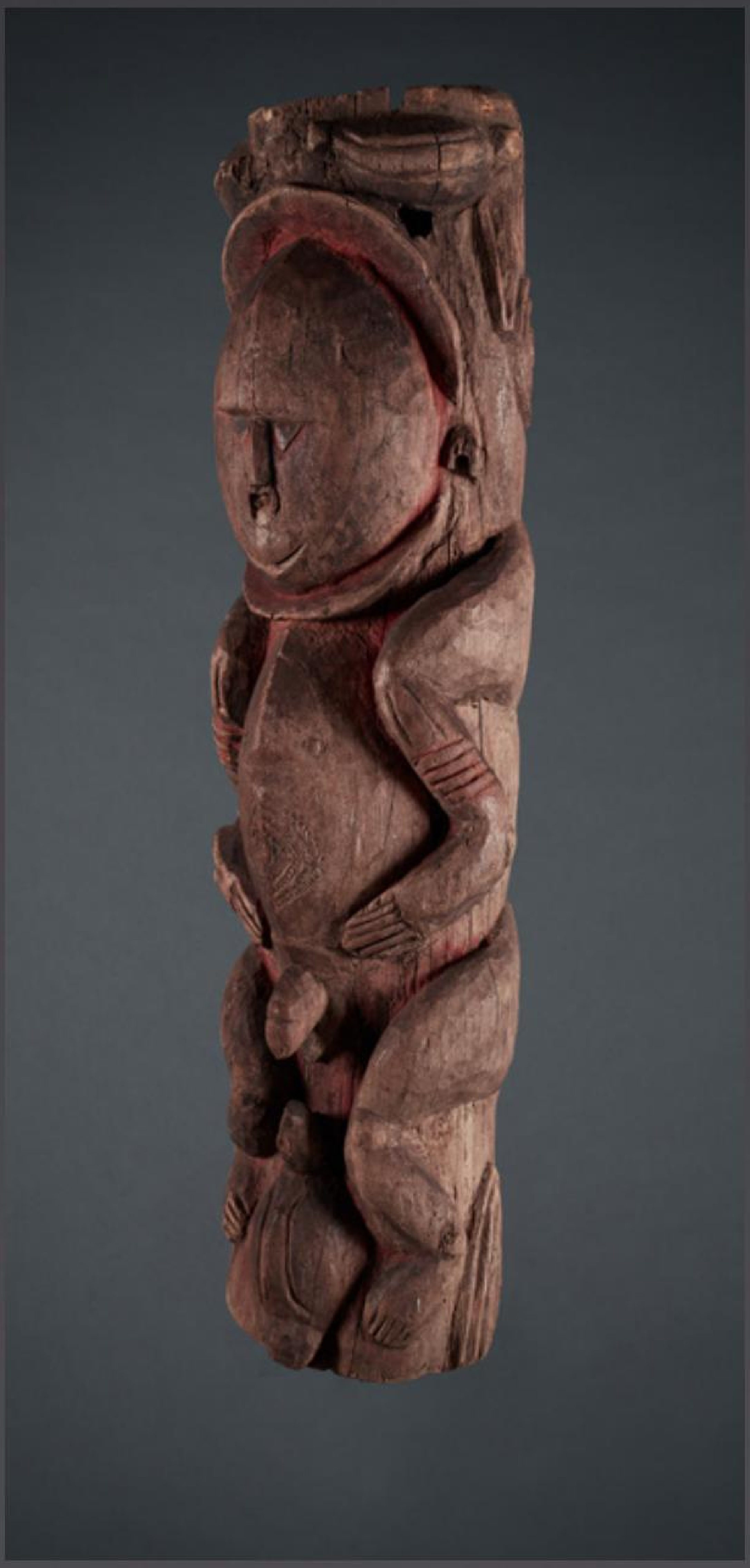
111 cm high x 27 cm diameter. **$ 4,500**

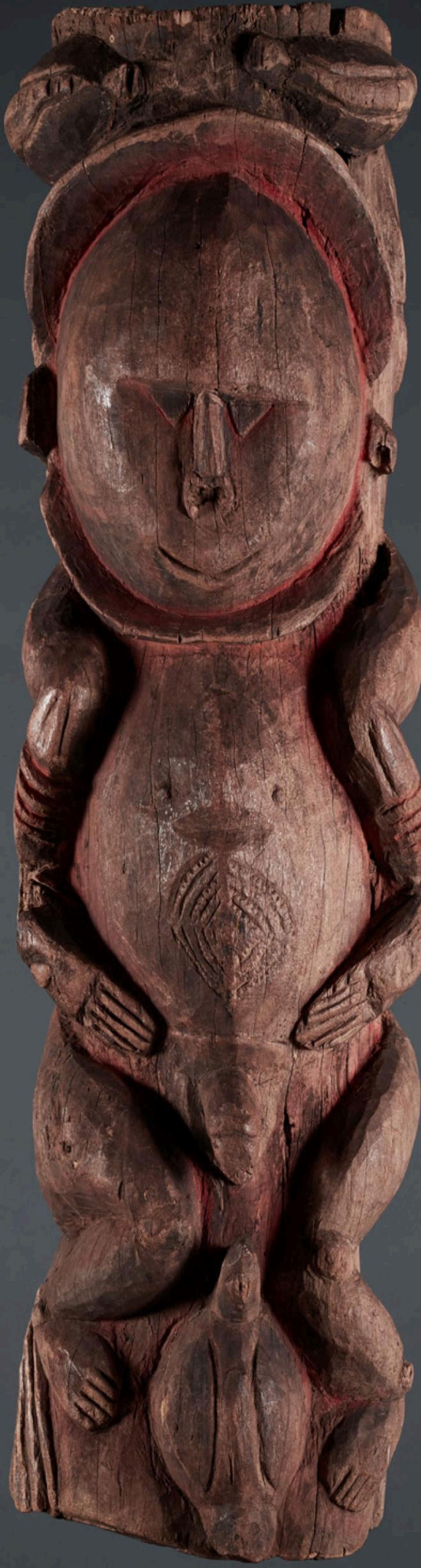


Sacred Flute Resonators, *urungwall*, with their personaal spears
in the Spirt House, Bongiora village c. 1973. Photo: Dr Fred Gerrits published:"the *Haus Tambaran* of Bongiora, G.J.M.Gerrits, Anthropunti DOCUMENTS, Lagarno, 2012. Plate 6.60, pp 339.





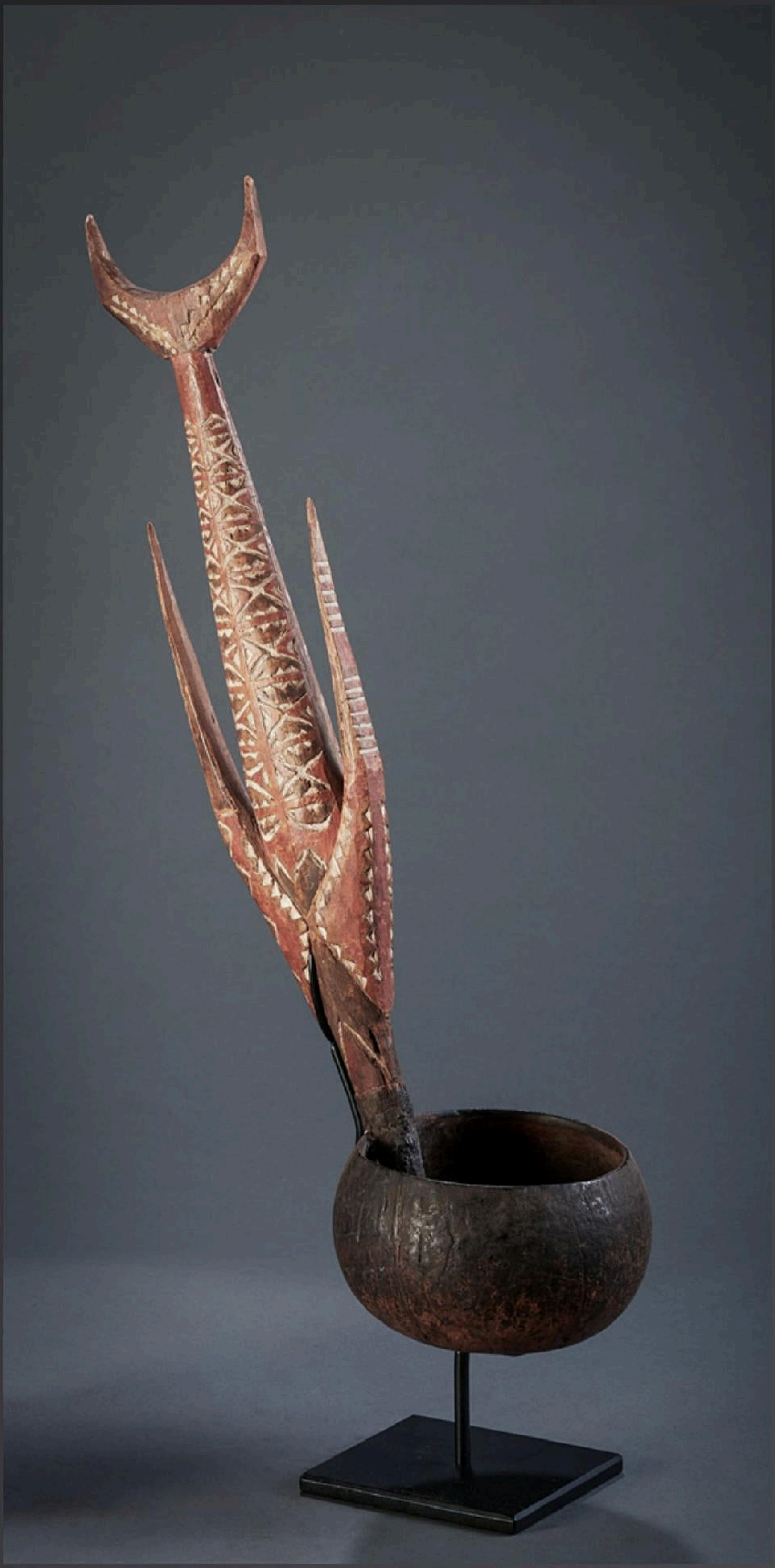




14. Traditional Ladel (with carved handle) Admiralty Islands, PNG

A finely carved spoon from the Admiralty Islands. These ceremonially carved spoons are always elaborately carved, with fine engraved designs, and painted colourfully in an orange-pink, with details in black and white. A very 3-dimensional handle in the form of a flying fish, with fine engraved geometric motifs over the whole fish form.
Early 20th C. ex-Alex Philips, Melbourne.

46 x 12 x 21 cm $ 2,500

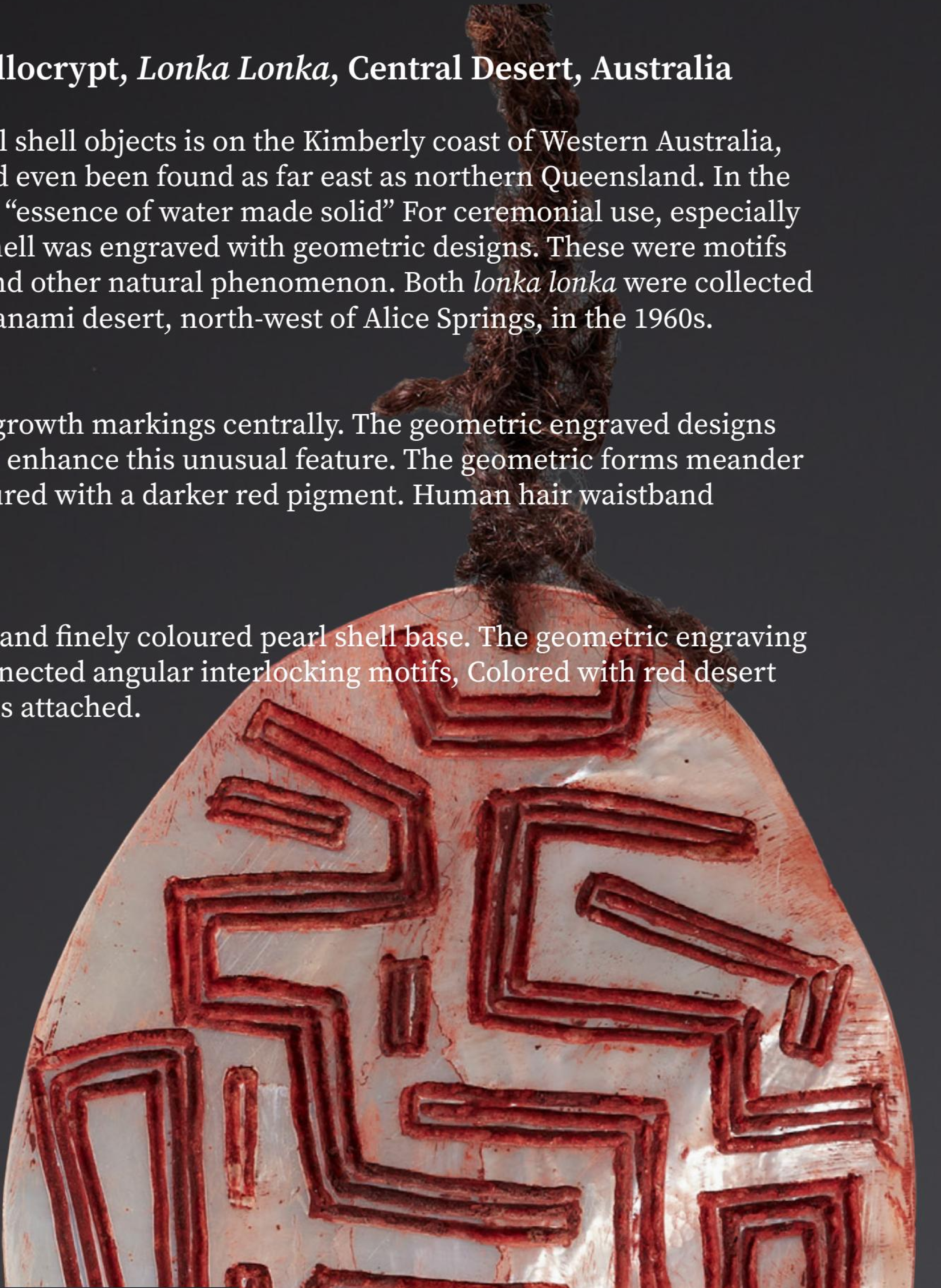


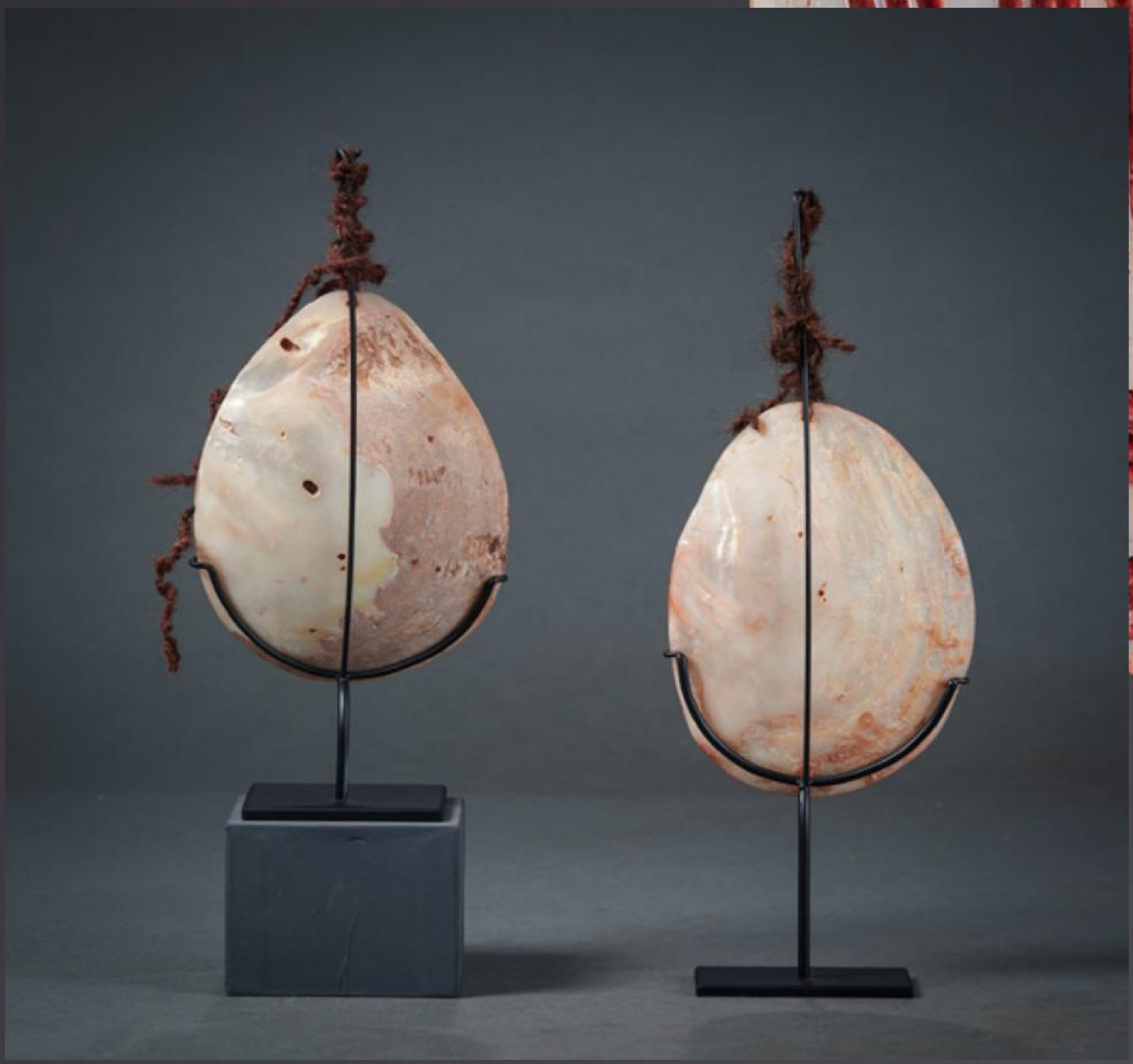
15. Aboriginal Pearlshell Phallocrypt, *Lonka Lonka*, Central Desert, Australia

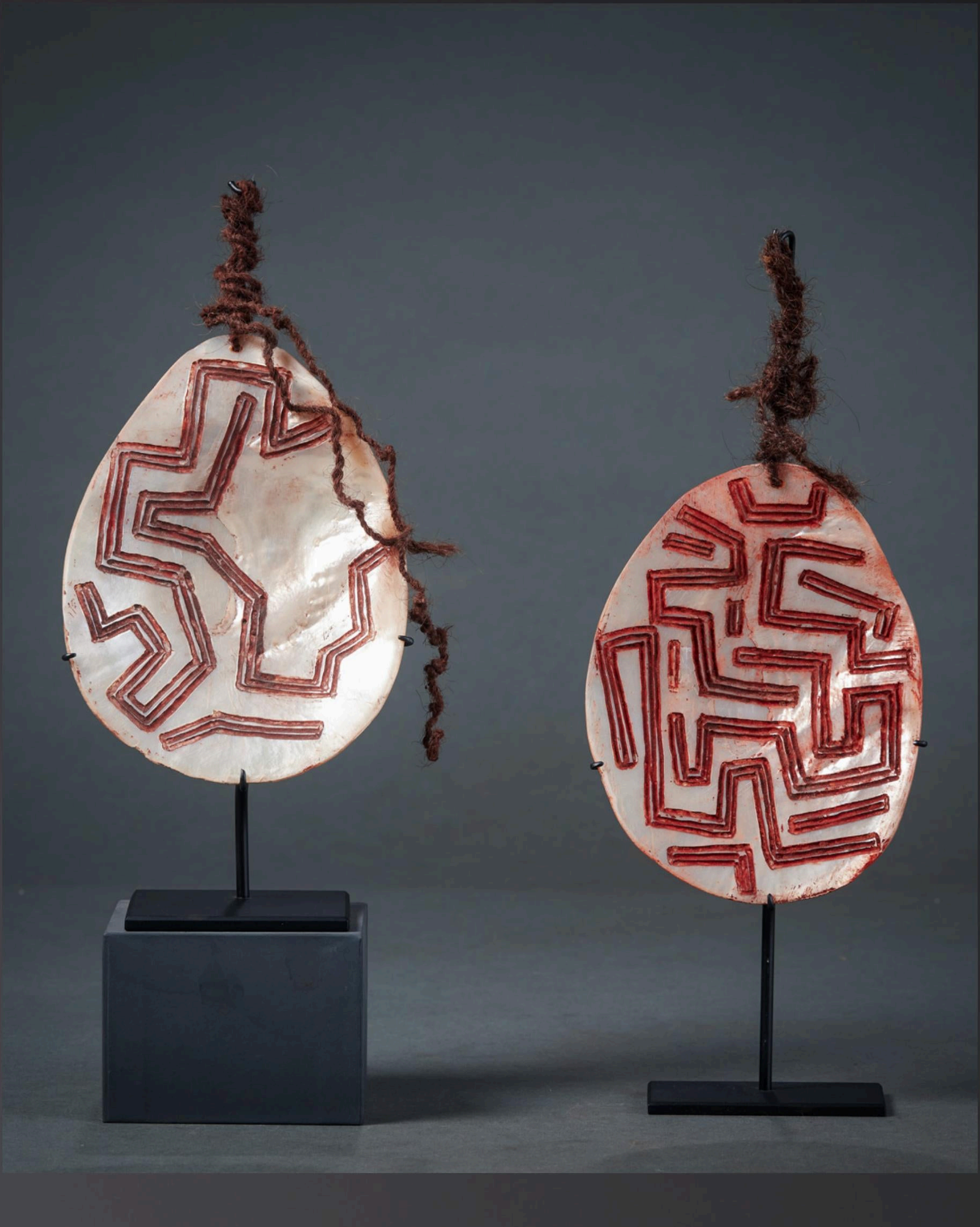
The origins of these engraved pearl shell objects is on the Kimberly coast of Western Australia, but they have spread far inland and even been found as far east as northern Queensland. In the dry interior that were described as “essence of water made solid” For ceremonial use, especially during male initiation, the pearl shell was engraved with geometric designs. These were motifs that symbolised water, lightning and other natural phenomenon. Both *lonka lonka* were collected at Yuendumu, on the edge of the Tanami desert, north-west of Alice Springs, in the 1960s.

a) A large pearl shell with distinct growth markings centrally. The geometric engraved designs tend to avoid this area, probably to enhance this unusual feature. The geometric forms meander rather than interlock and are coloured with a darker red pigment. Human hair waistband is attached.
17 x 13 cm $ 1,900

b) This a large, beautifully smooth and finely coloured pearl shell base. The geometric engraving covers the whole surface in disconnected angular interlocking motifs, Colored with red desert pigments. Human hair waistband is attached.
17 x 13 cm $ 2,000



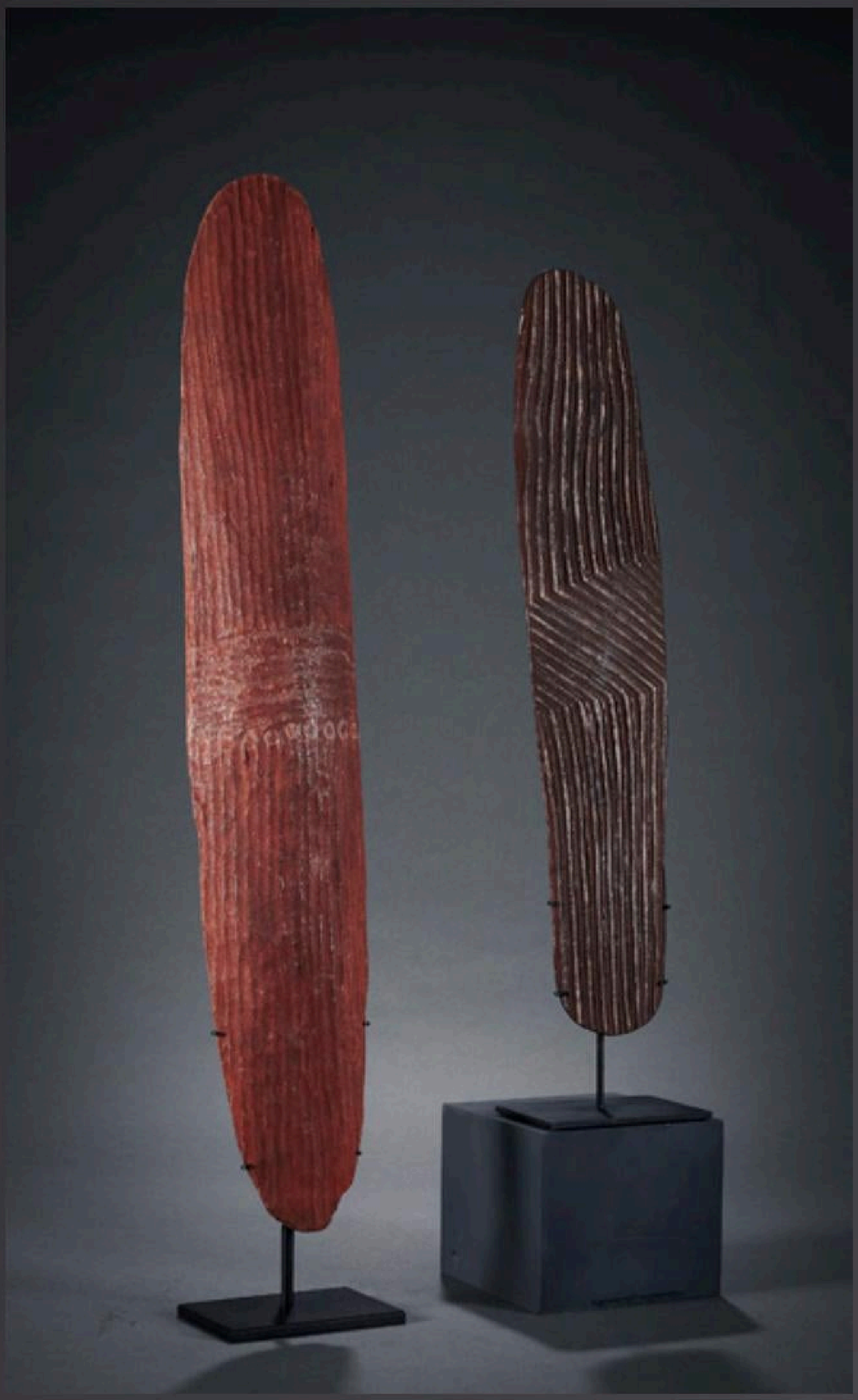


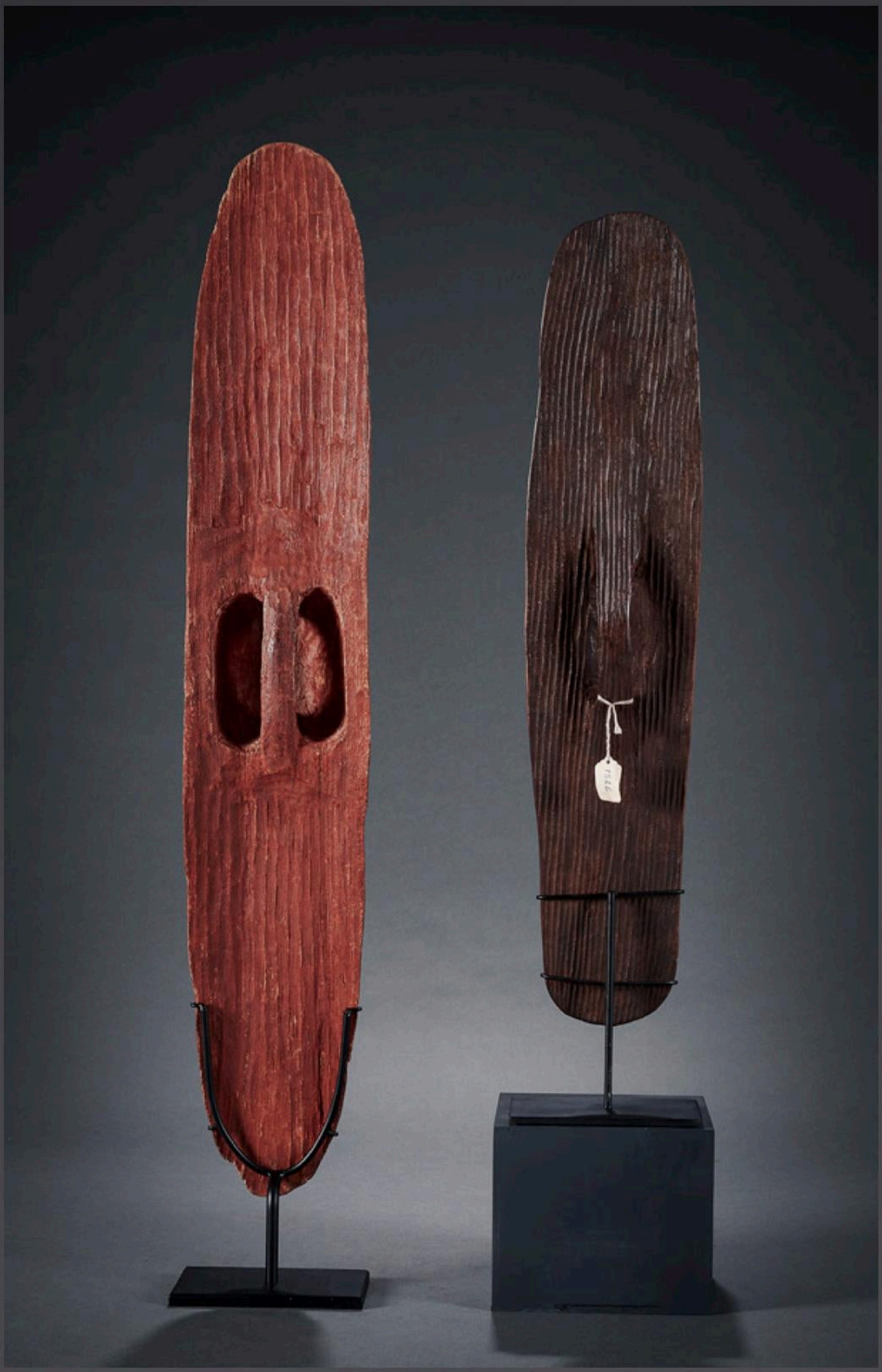


16. Two Aboriginal Shields, Australia, early 20thC

a) Beanwood Shield, Central Desert Region, Australia. The curved front has wide vertical grooves, with desert-red ochre colour, and some fine white painted designs. The back is also grooved, with a beautifully carved handle showing some patina.
84 x 15 x 6 cm $1,400

b) Wunda Shield, Western Australia. These shields are found widely in WA but appear to have originated along the coast between the Gascoyne and Murchison Rivers. They typically have fine zigzag designs, associated with rain and water, painted in alternate red and white pigments. The back of this shield is also finely grooved.
64 x 14 x 3.5 cm $ 2,800

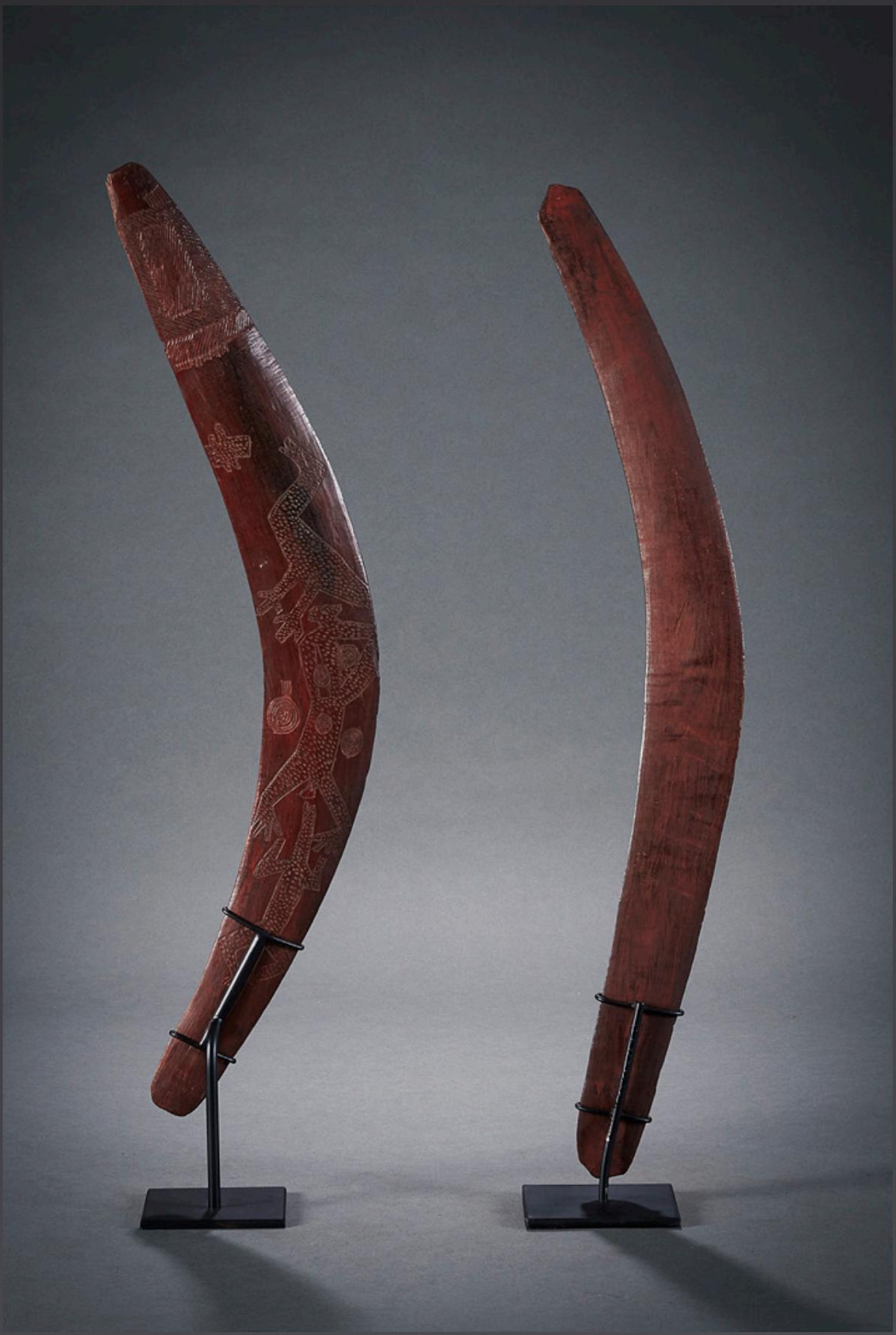




17. Two Old Boomerangs, Australia

a) A finely incised boomerang from Coopers Creek, Western Queensland. It is likely to have been a fighting weapon decorated with the maker’s totemic designs. The surface is covered in fluid designs, with two pointed ends to the boomerang.
65 x 12 cm $ 1,200

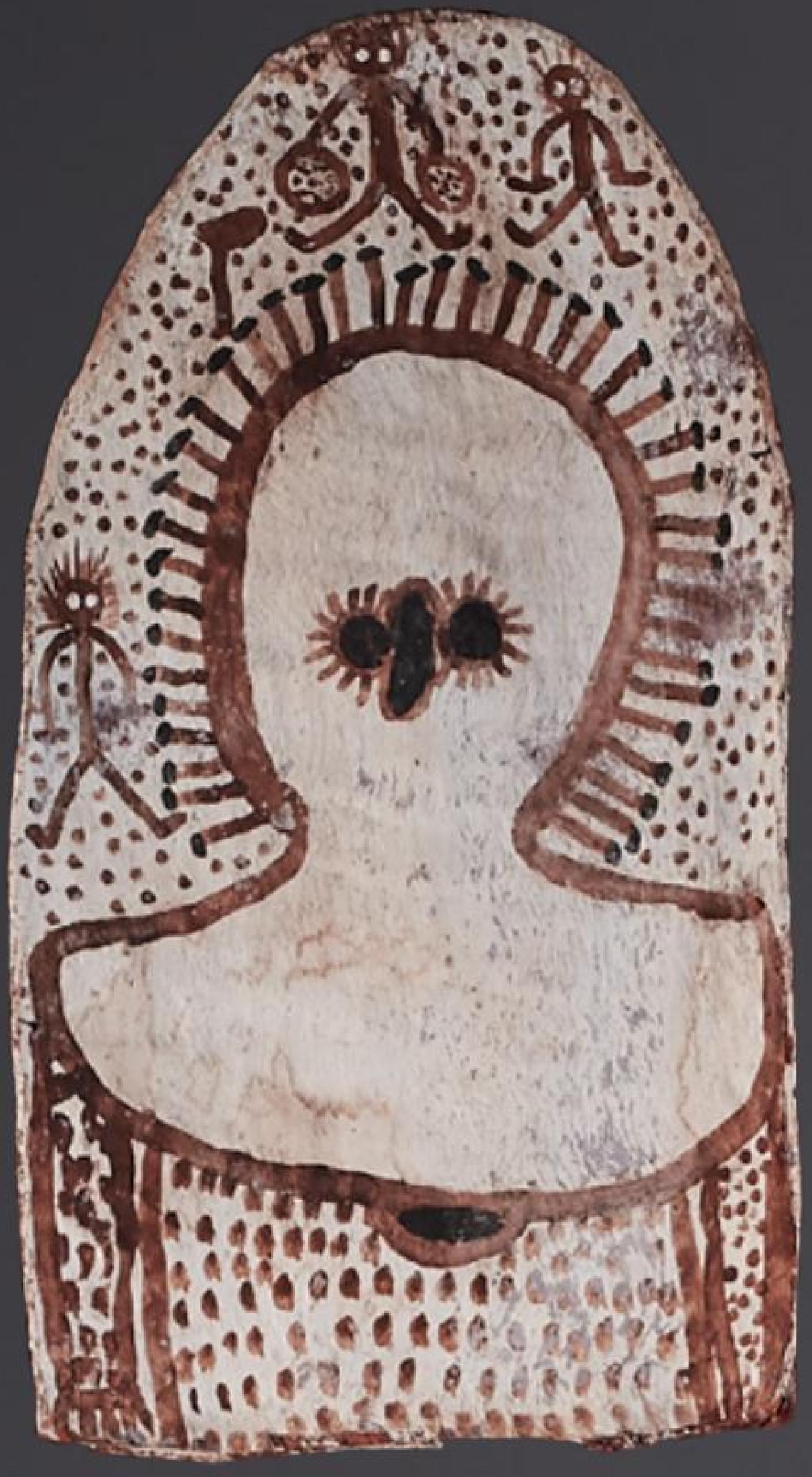
b) The open form of this boomerang is typical of the Kimberleys. The engraving is precise and very fine, with older traditional designs on one side. The reverse, possibly even carved at a later time, is more sparse and depicts animals. The front is 19thC, the reverse quite possibly early 20thC.
64 x 13 cm $ 2,000

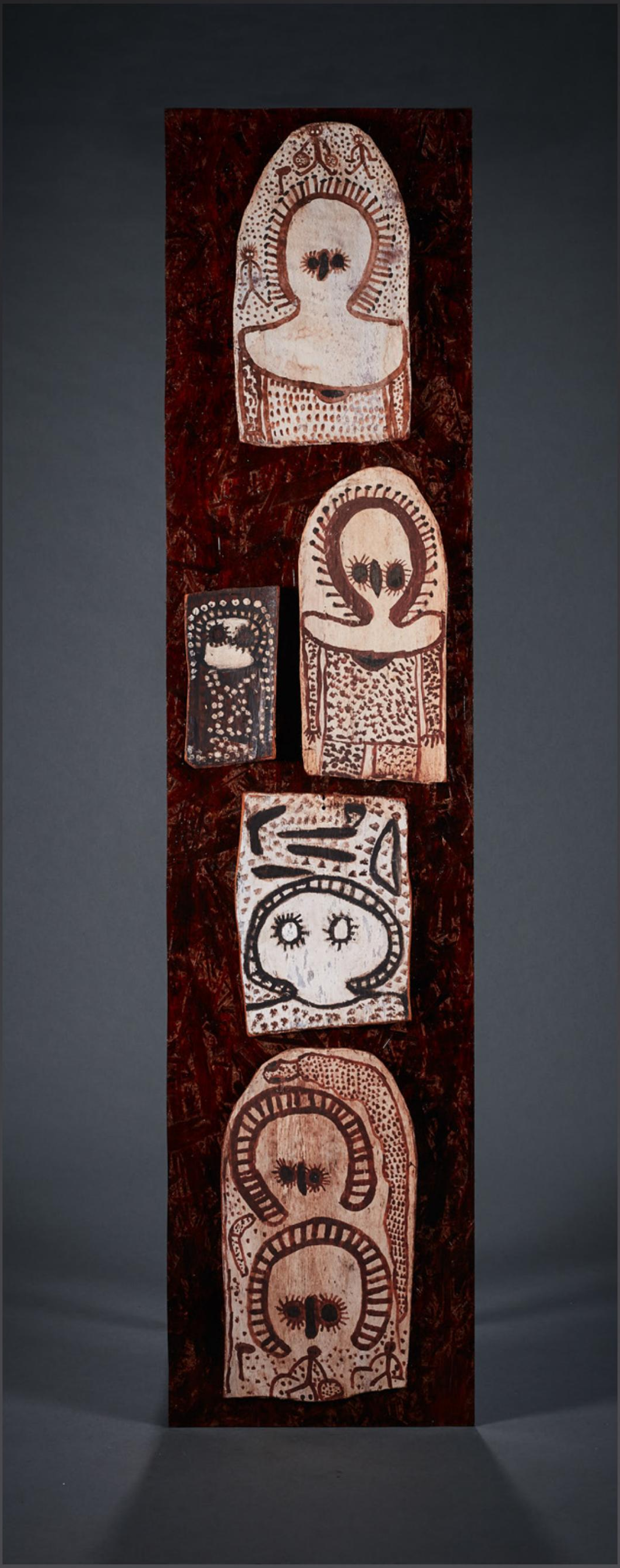


18. Five Aboriginal Wandjina Bark Paintings, Kimberley Ranges, Western Australia

These Aboriginal bark paintings were made in the late 1960s-early 1970s and remained together in the Hodgkinson home for more than 50 years. All the paintings depict the Wandjina spirit, who is associated with rain, water and especially the annual arrival of the monsoon. Wandjina spirits appear on many ancient cave paintings in the Kimberley region. Dorothy Bennett (1923-2003) was a great friend and helped them acquire this collection. They vary in their interpretation of the Wandjina but as a group and having been in a single collection so long, they become a wonderful and important group and, hopefully, stay together.
Ex-collection Frank Hodgkinson (1919-2001), Sydney.

a) 52 x 28 cm	**$ 2,800**
b) 29 x 14 cm	**$ 1,000**
c) 51 x 24 cm	**$ 2,500**
d) 38 x 28 cm	**$ 1,500**
e) 58 x 31 cm	**$ 3,200**

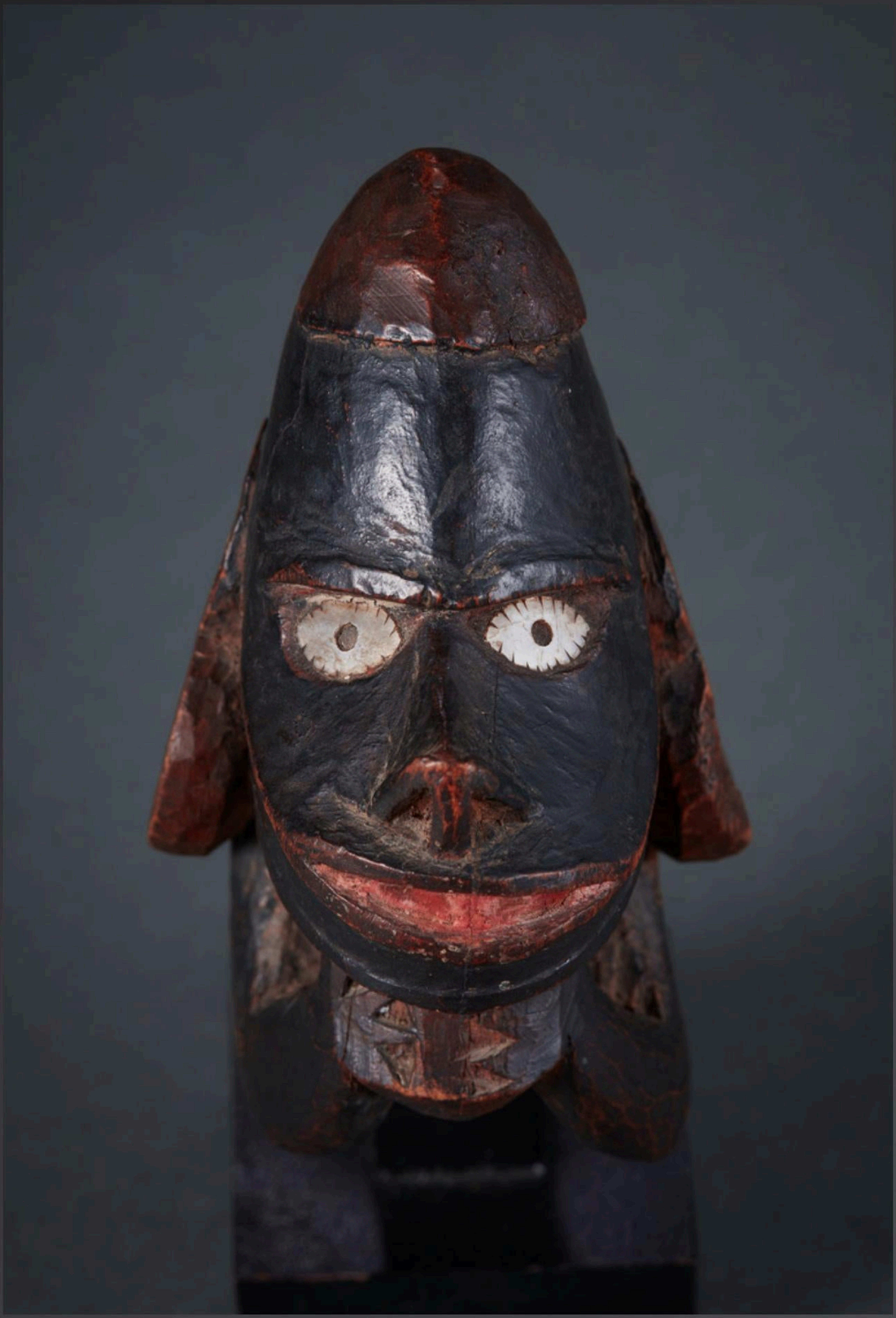


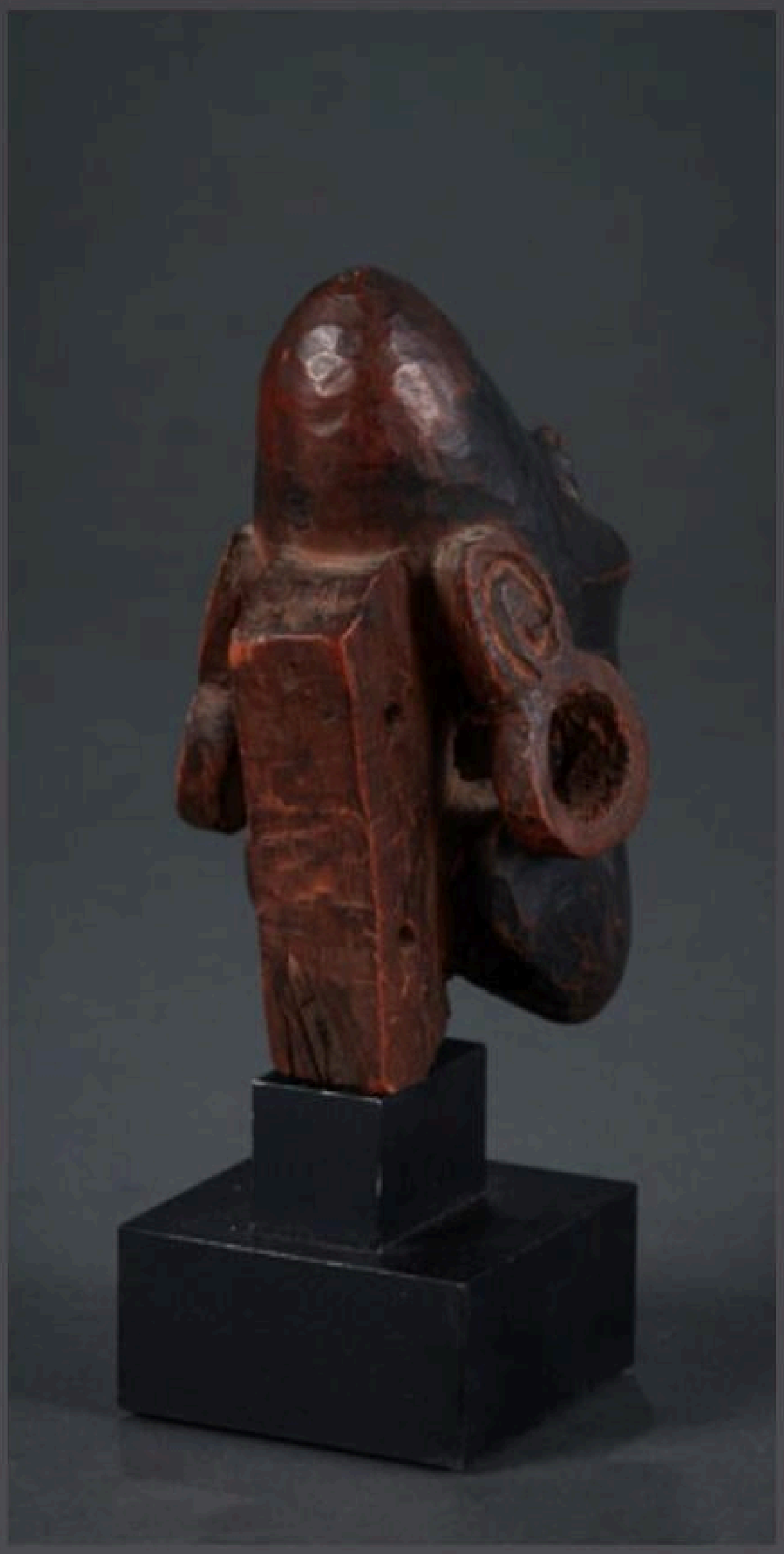


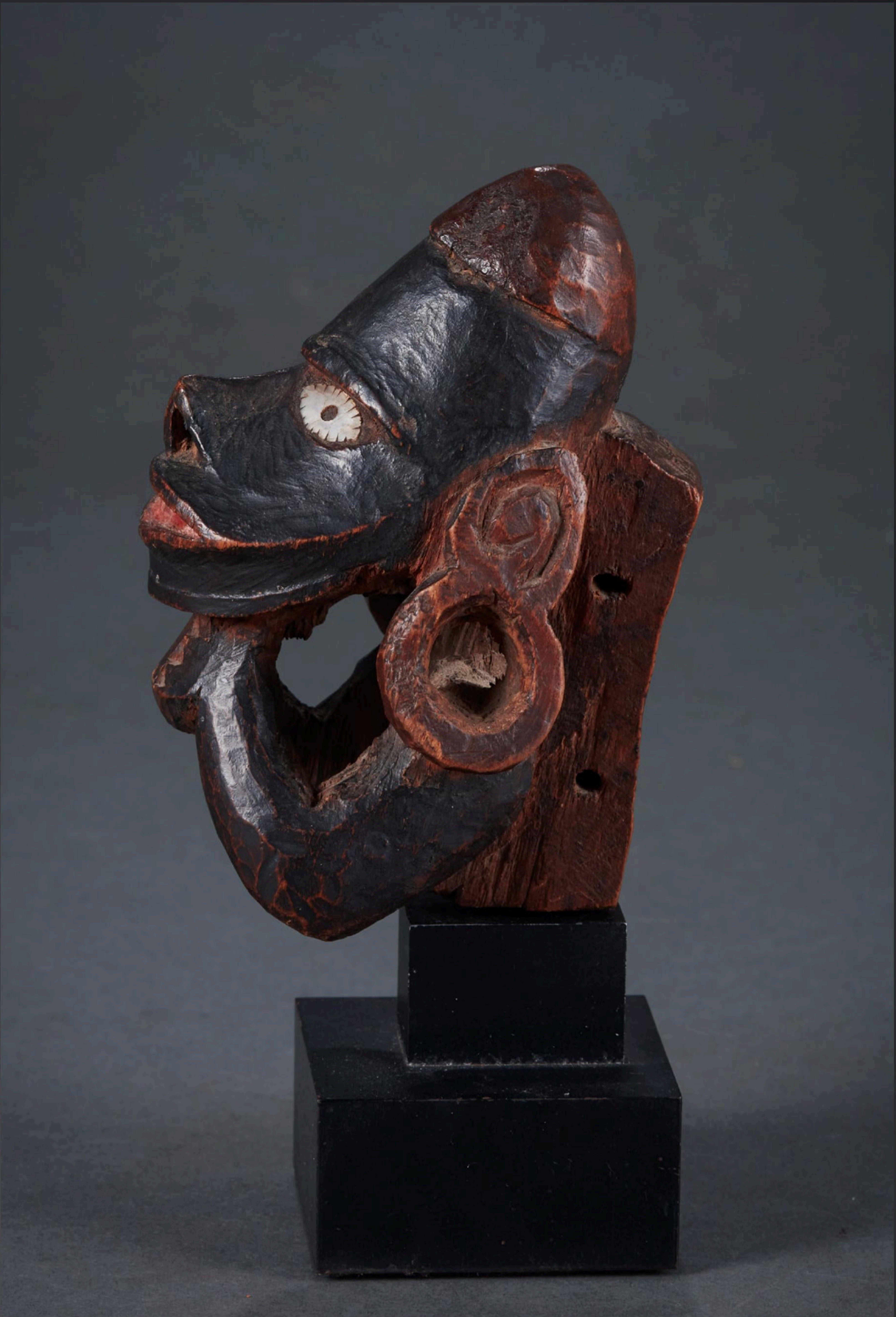
19. Canoe Prow Ornament, *Nzu Nzu*, Solomon Islands

This canoe prow is small, but not exceptionally so, with a simple, elegant form. It is late 19th/very early 20th Century. It may have been used on a full-sized canoe, but it may also possibly be from a large model canoe. The wear and tear evidenced on the mounting section suggests it is more likely to have been a large war canoe. The carving is very well done, with finely engraved pearl shell for the eyes, but nowhere else is pearl shell found on the prow. The prow has black resin covering the main carved form as is typical of *nzu nzu*. Where the timber is exposed, on the head and the mount section, it has a wonderful old patina, in a deep honey-colour.
Ex-Anthony Meyer, Paris; ex-Alex Philips, Melbourne; ex-Elizabeth Pryce collection, Sydney.

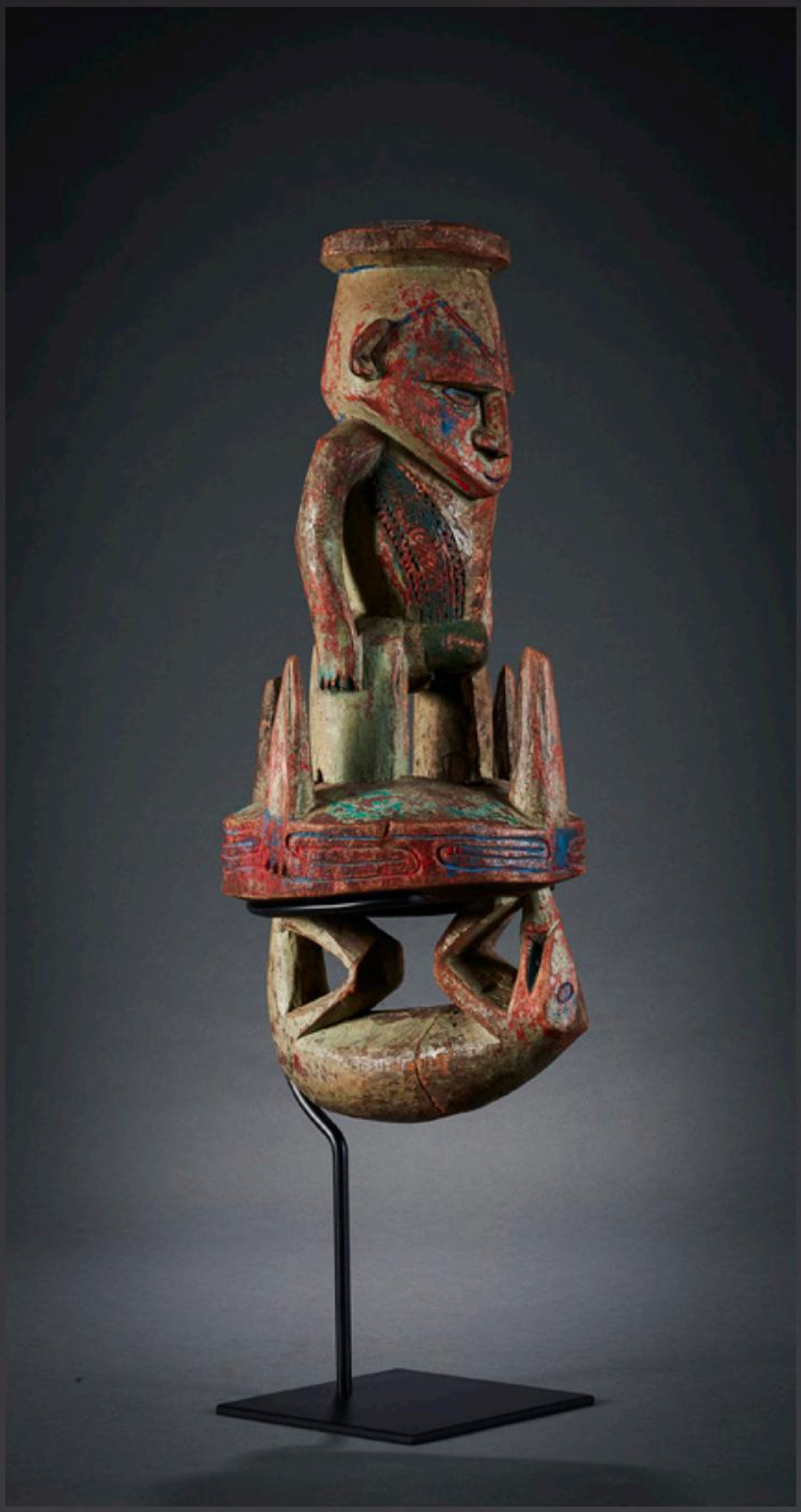
13 x 7.5 x 9 cm $ 8,500





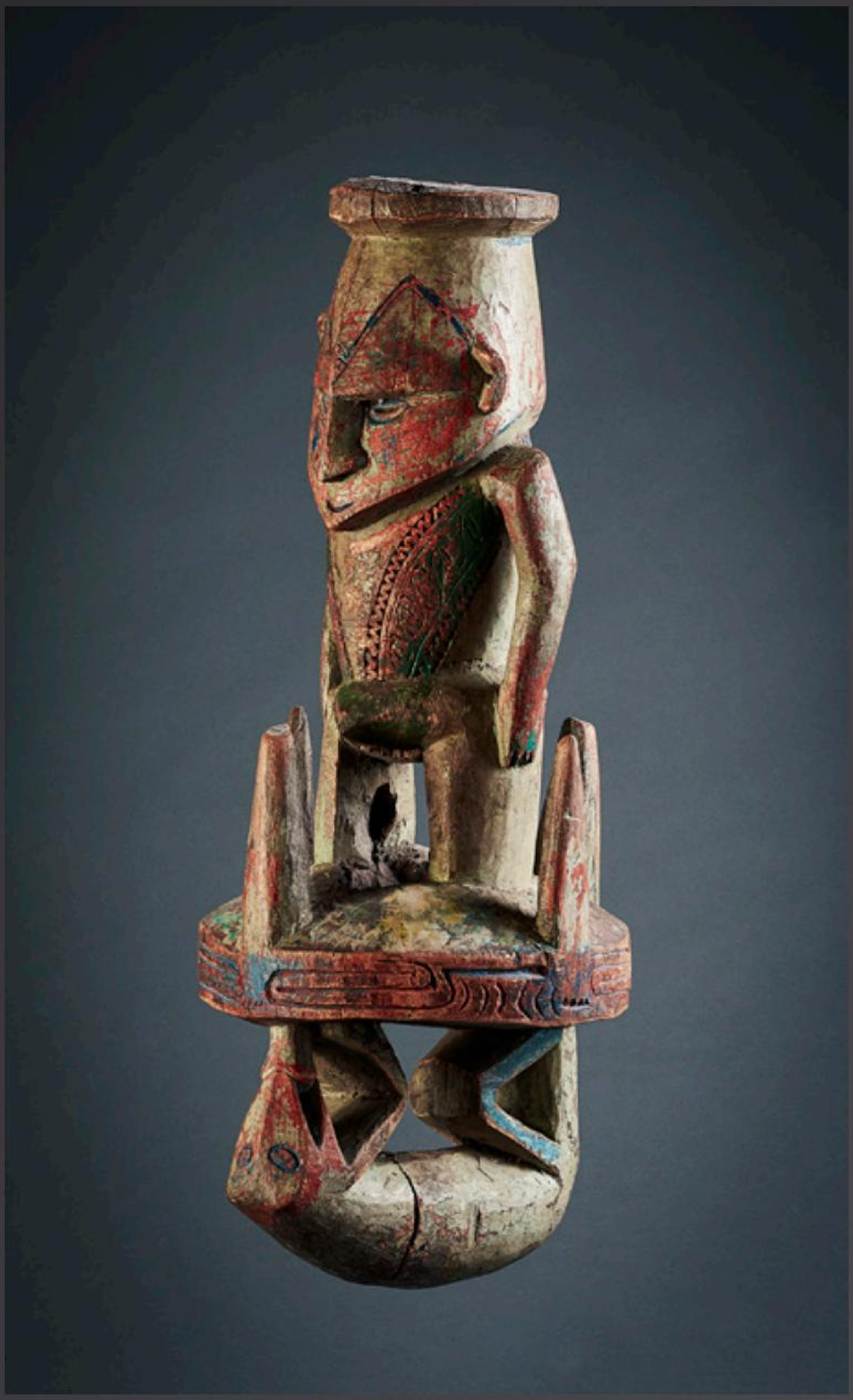


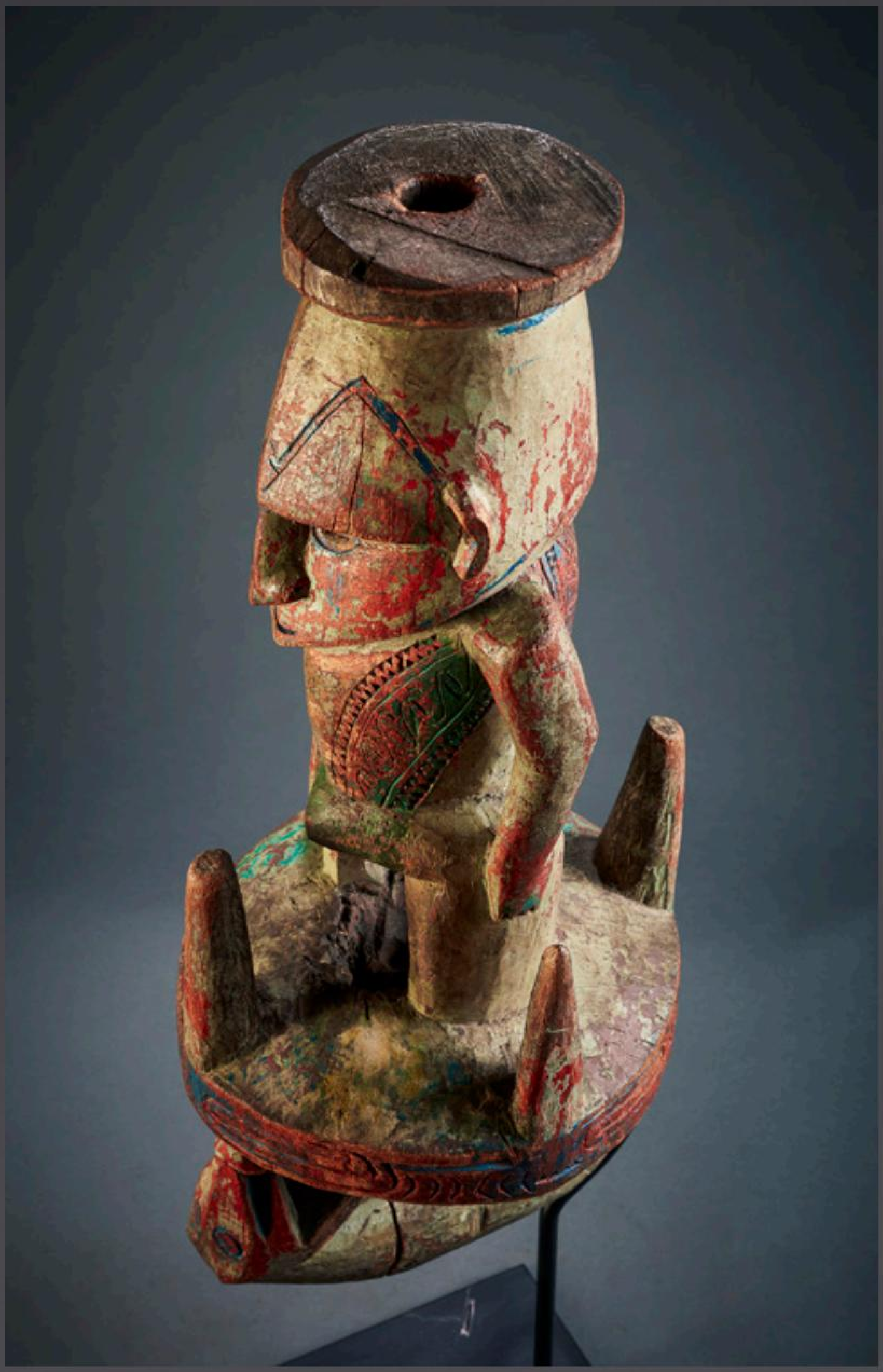
20. Ceremonial Basket Hook, Murik Lakes, Mouth of Sepik River, PNG, early 20thC

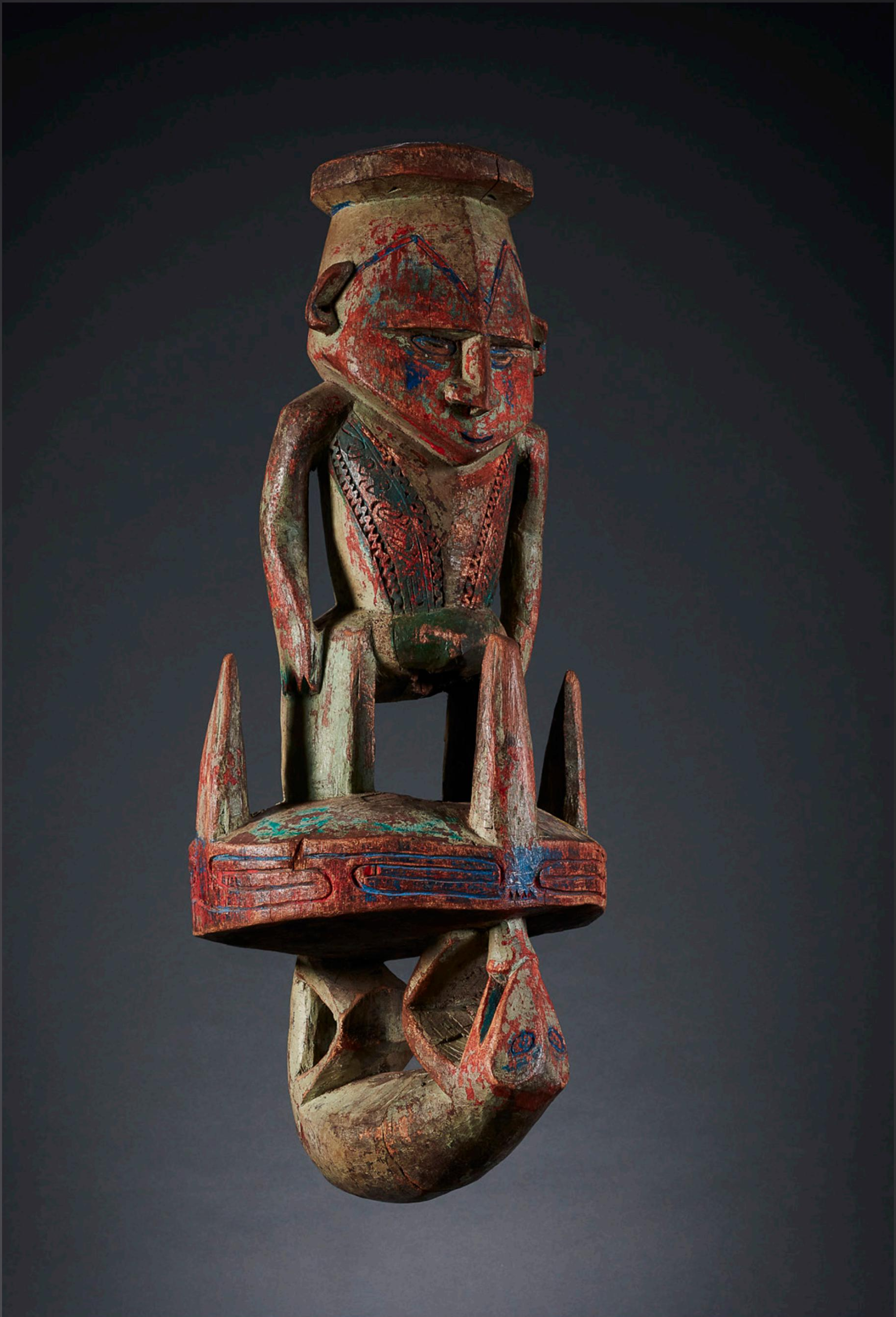


This is an extraordinary hook, beautifully carved, but principally in terms of its colouration. There are many layers of paint; the most recent is a pale green; various shades of similar green enamel paint are often found used around the time of the Second World War (probably camouflage paint). Below this are other layers of paint that show its use over several generations. It is carved from hardwood, which is one reason it has survived so well over all these years. The main male figure is typical of the Murik Lakes villages with a strong, resilient stance. A hole goes through the figure from the circular top, coming out between the figure's legs. A hanging rope or cane was knotted through, strapping the hook from the rafters of the Spirit House. This hook would no doubt hold offerings to both the spirits and Big Man of the Spirit House – offerings of betel nut or food. Below is a possum or *cuscus* (sloth-like marsupial), simply and almost abstractly carved. It would most probably depict a clan totem and ancestral being.

54 x 19.5 x 24 cm $ 4,800





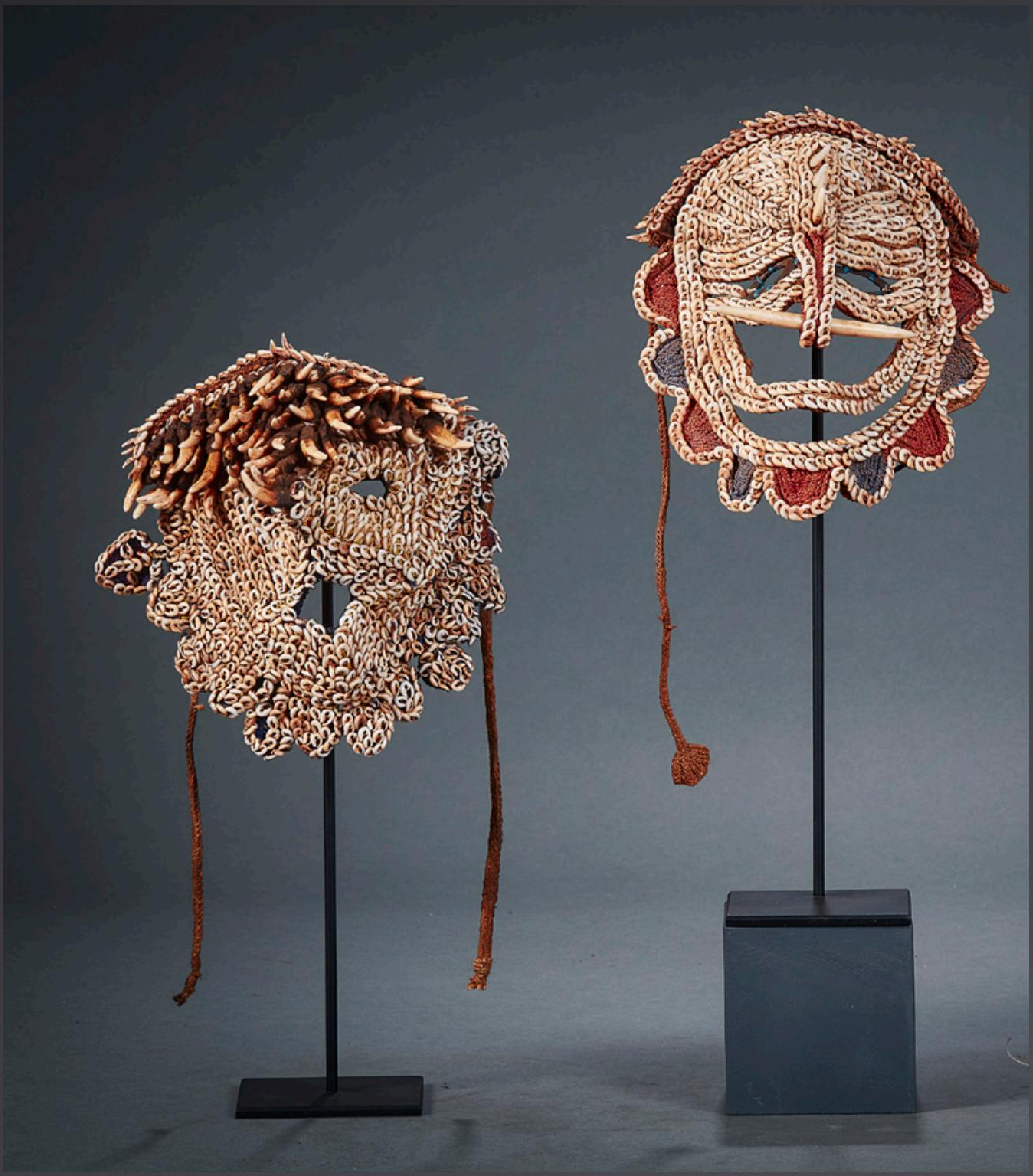


21. Three Woven Masks, Malala Region, Coastal Madang Province, PNG, mid-20thC

Masks of woven fibre with nassa and cowrie shells attached are restricted to only a few groups of villages on the north coast of PNG, to the west of Madang. All other villages in this quite extensive cultural region carve and use wooden masks. They are called *dema* in one language group, and *bilibili* in the adjacent group. Unlike wooden masks, these *dema* are more susceptible to deterioration, so few ancient examples exist, except as fragments. Legend says that a sea spirit first taught this technique to an old, infirm man, left behind in a village when everyone departed to attend a ceremony far from home. He passed this knowledge on but the technique has remained confined to a quite small area. These masks are highly prized as only a few men make them, and they are also used as wealth objects at bride price and other transactional rituals.

a) 23 x 22 x 13 cm $ 2,800

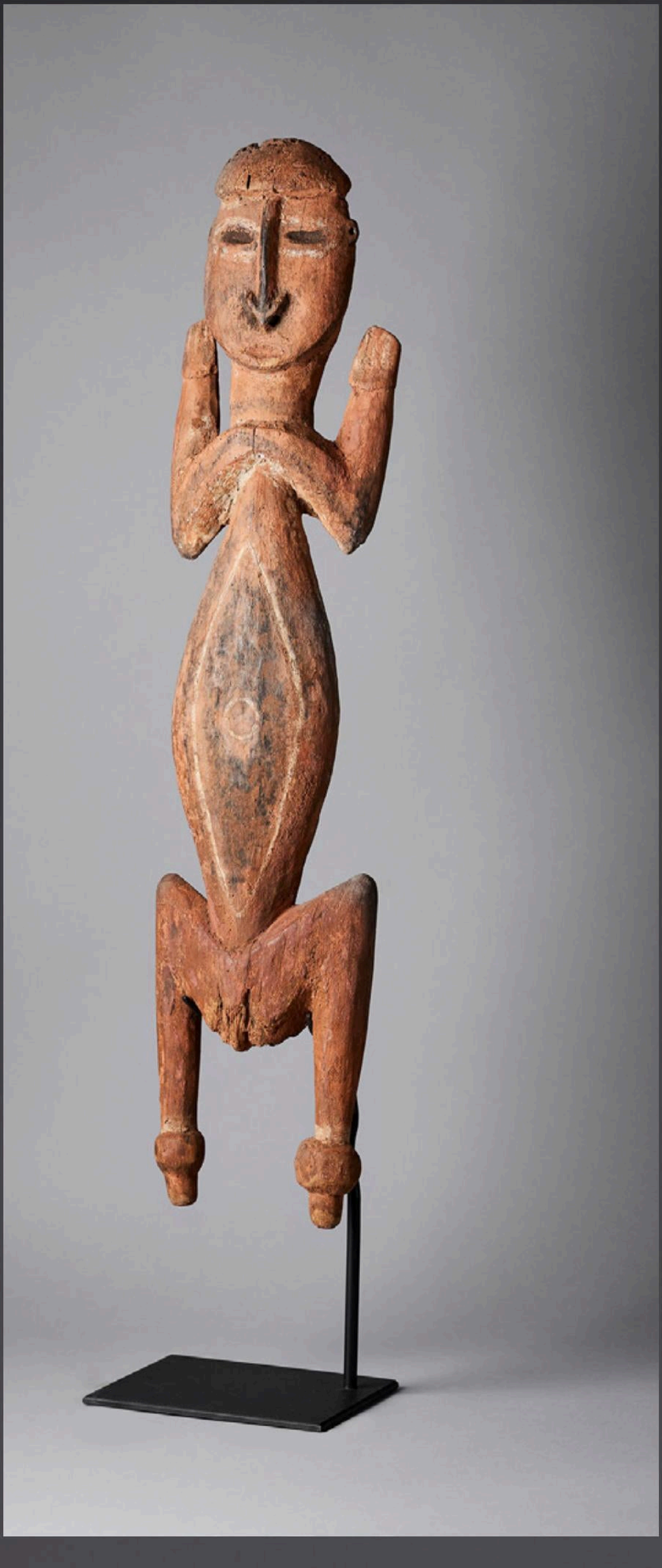
b) 21 x 23 x 12 cm $ 2,700

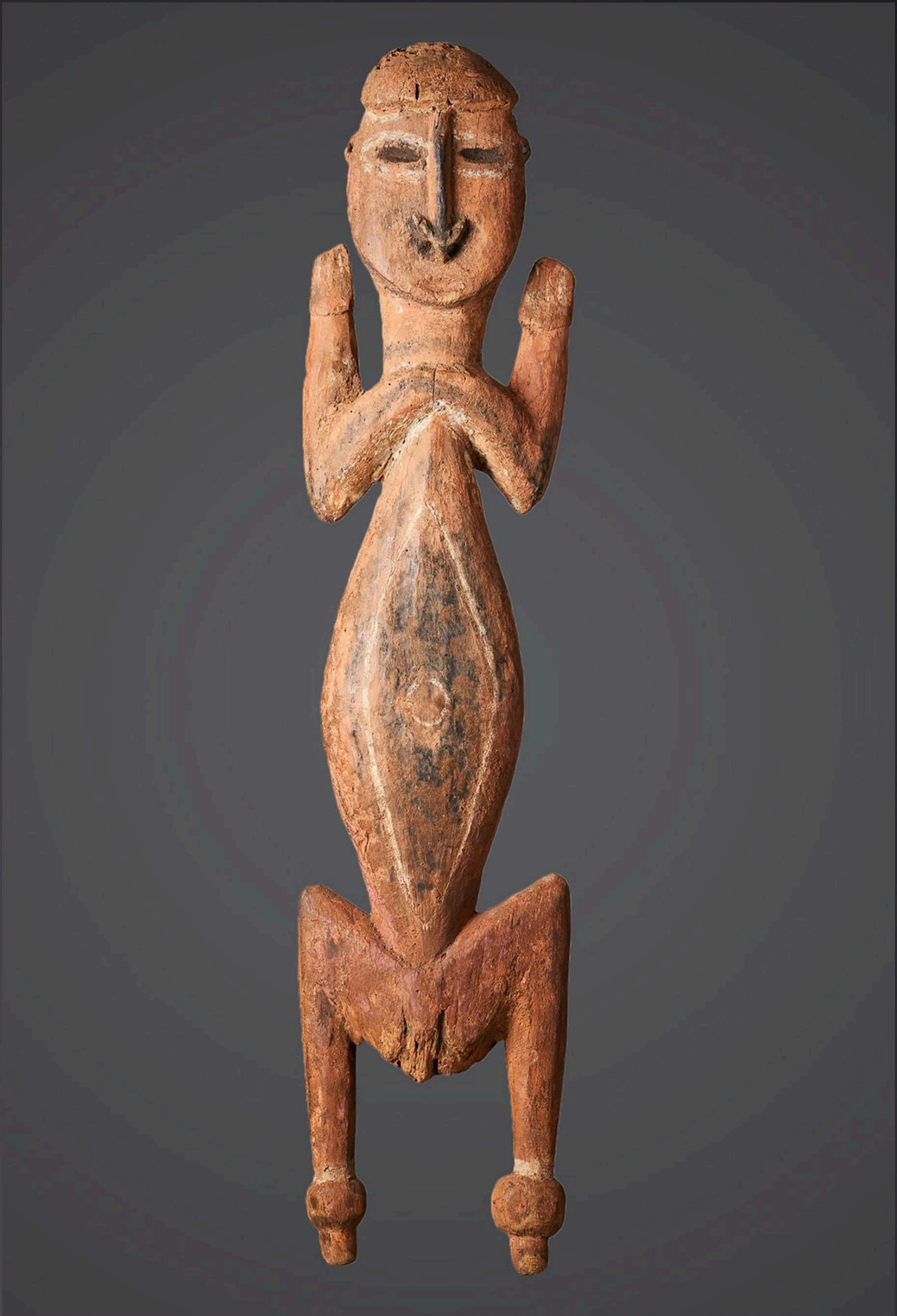


22. Ritual Female Figure *Nagum-Boiken*, PNG 19TH/EARLY 20THC

This is a stone-carved pre-contact figure; the paintwork is soft and, with age, has become an integral part of the wood. The elongated form and open face make it one of the more elegant examples of extant *boiken* figures. *Boiken* figurative sculptures are generally more abstract in both facial and overall forms than the neighbouring Abelam, and southern Iatmul forms.

76 x 19 cm $ 5,500

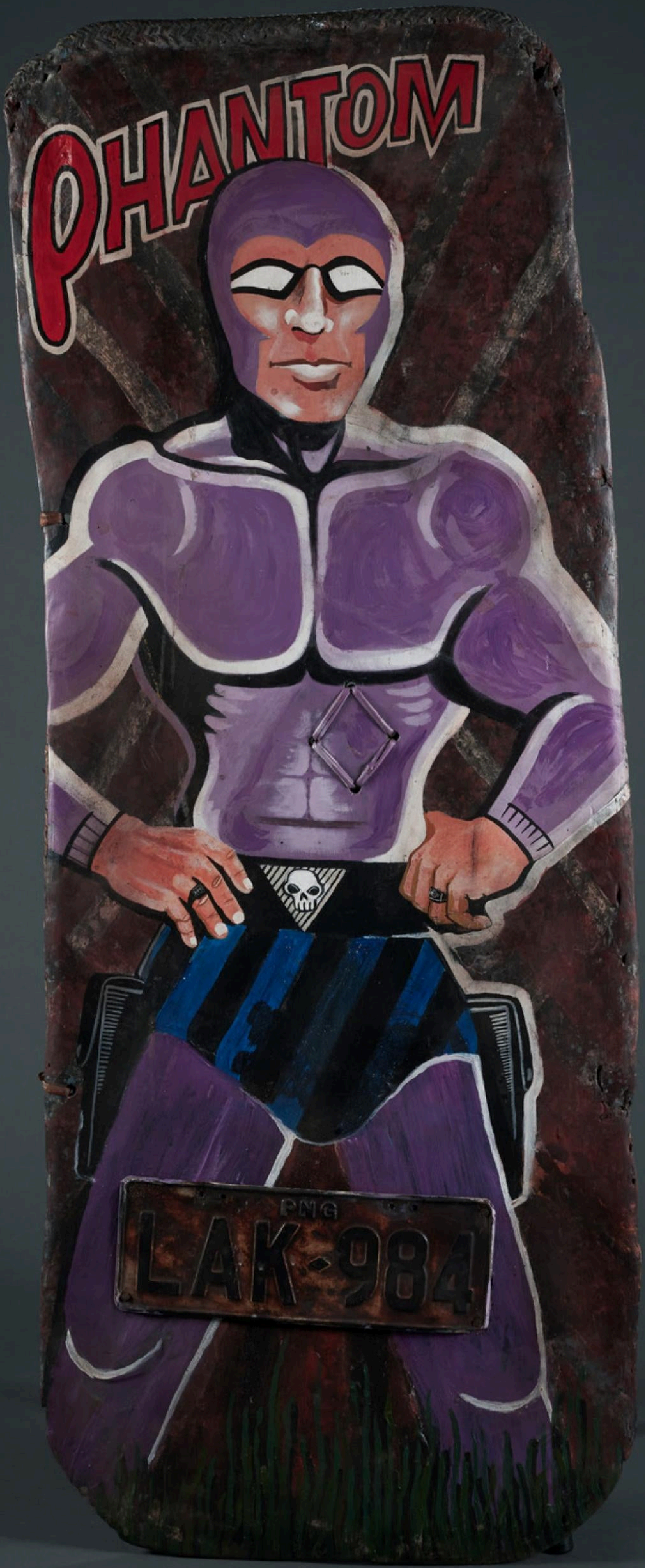




23. Phantom Shield, Wahgi Valley, Papua New Guinea Highlands. Artist: unknown. Circa 2008

This is an older shield, with the original abstract Wahgi geometric motifs under the later addition of the Phantom. The central Phantom figure, painted in purple, has two pistols, in their pouch, with hands on hips. This is a very confident posture, exuding that impression of invincibility. Lower on the shield is a car (or truck) number plate. Its rusted condition suggests it is old, probably from an old, defunct vehicle. However, it carries the sense of wealth and power that owning such a vehicle gives to a clan group. This is why it has been nailed on – to state that they are a rich and powerful clan – beware.

152 x 57 cm $ 5,500

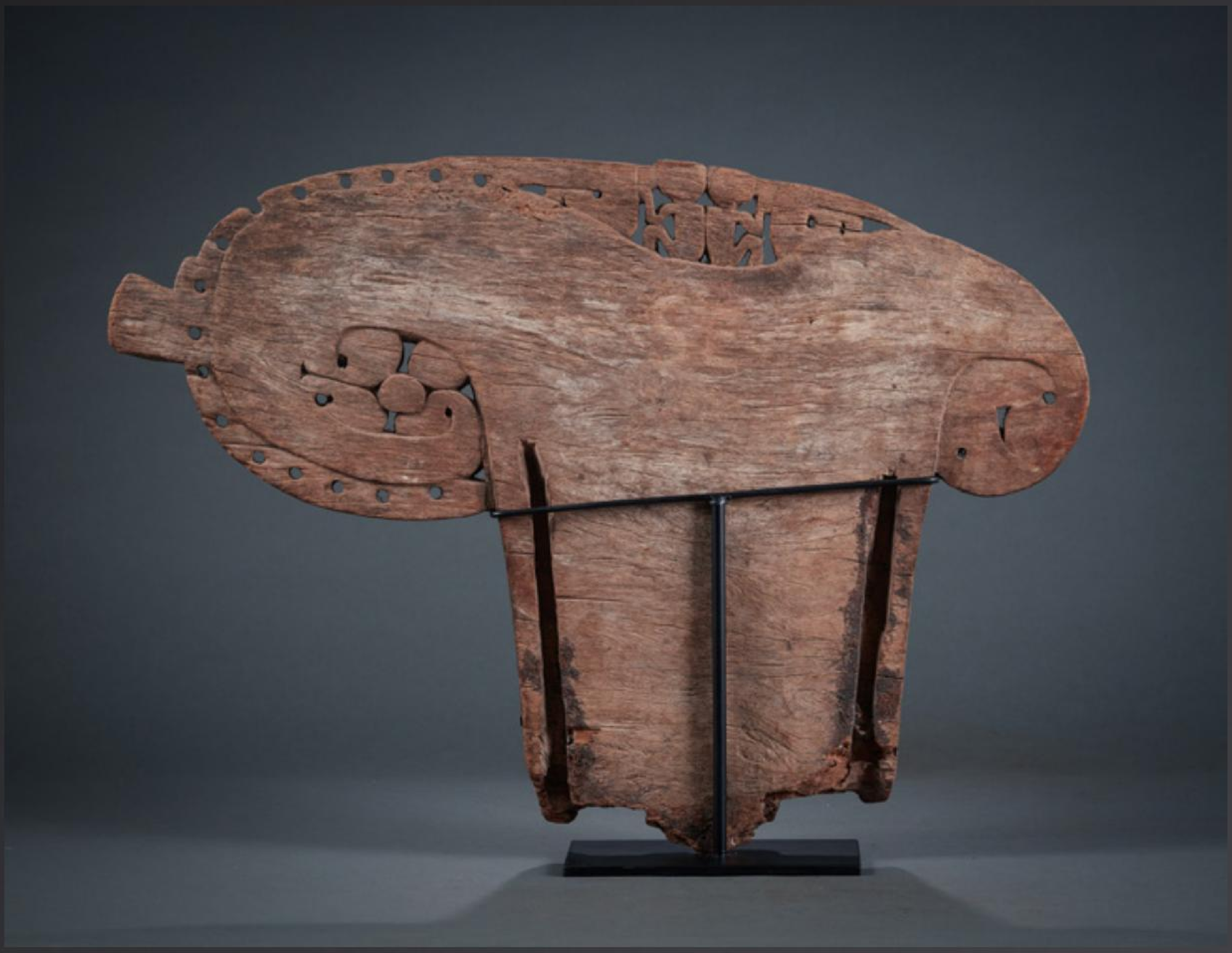

PHANTOM
PNG
LAK-984

24. Canoe Splashboard, *Lagim*, Trobriand Islands, PNG

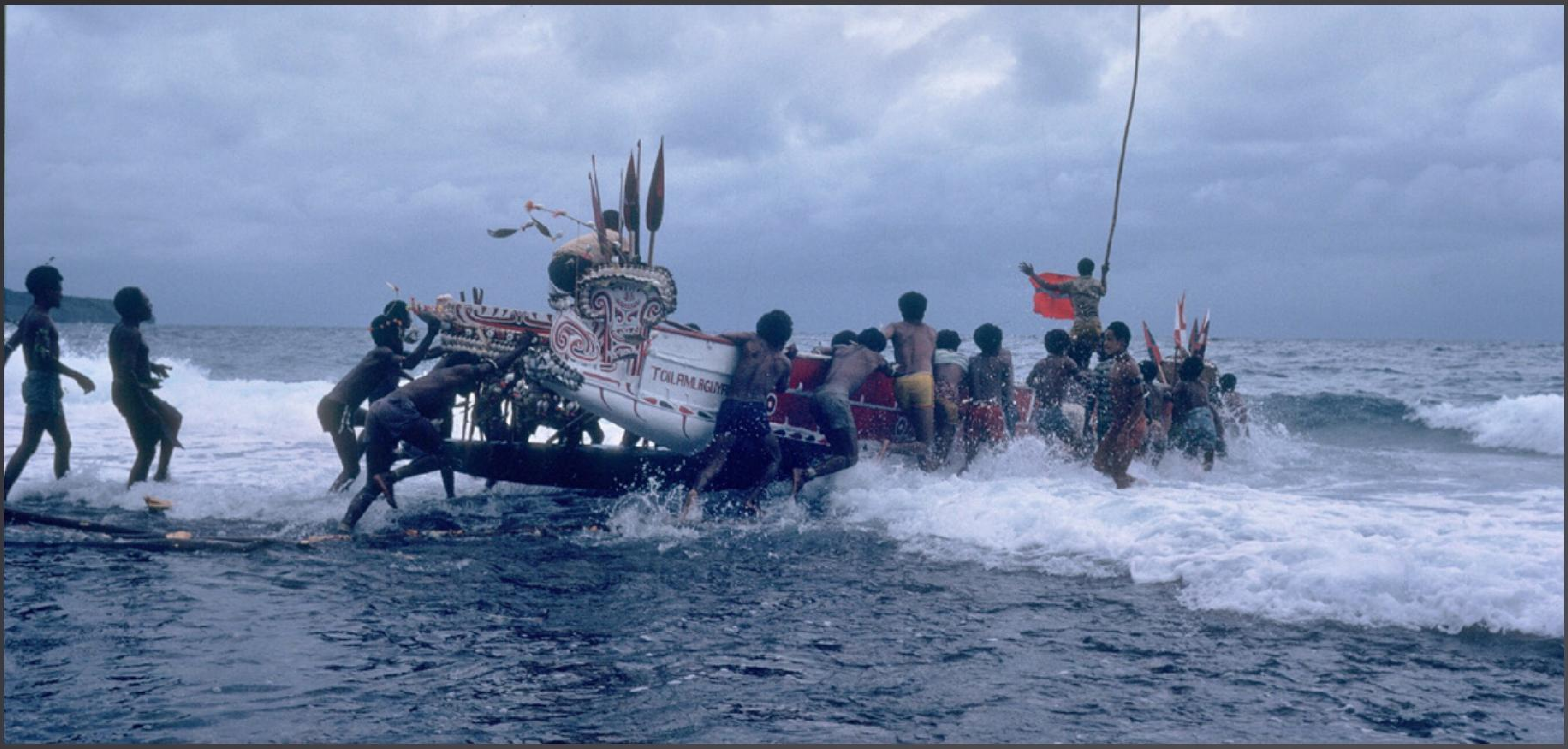
Ex-Galleries Primitif, Sydney; ex-Frank Hodgkinson coll, Sydney.

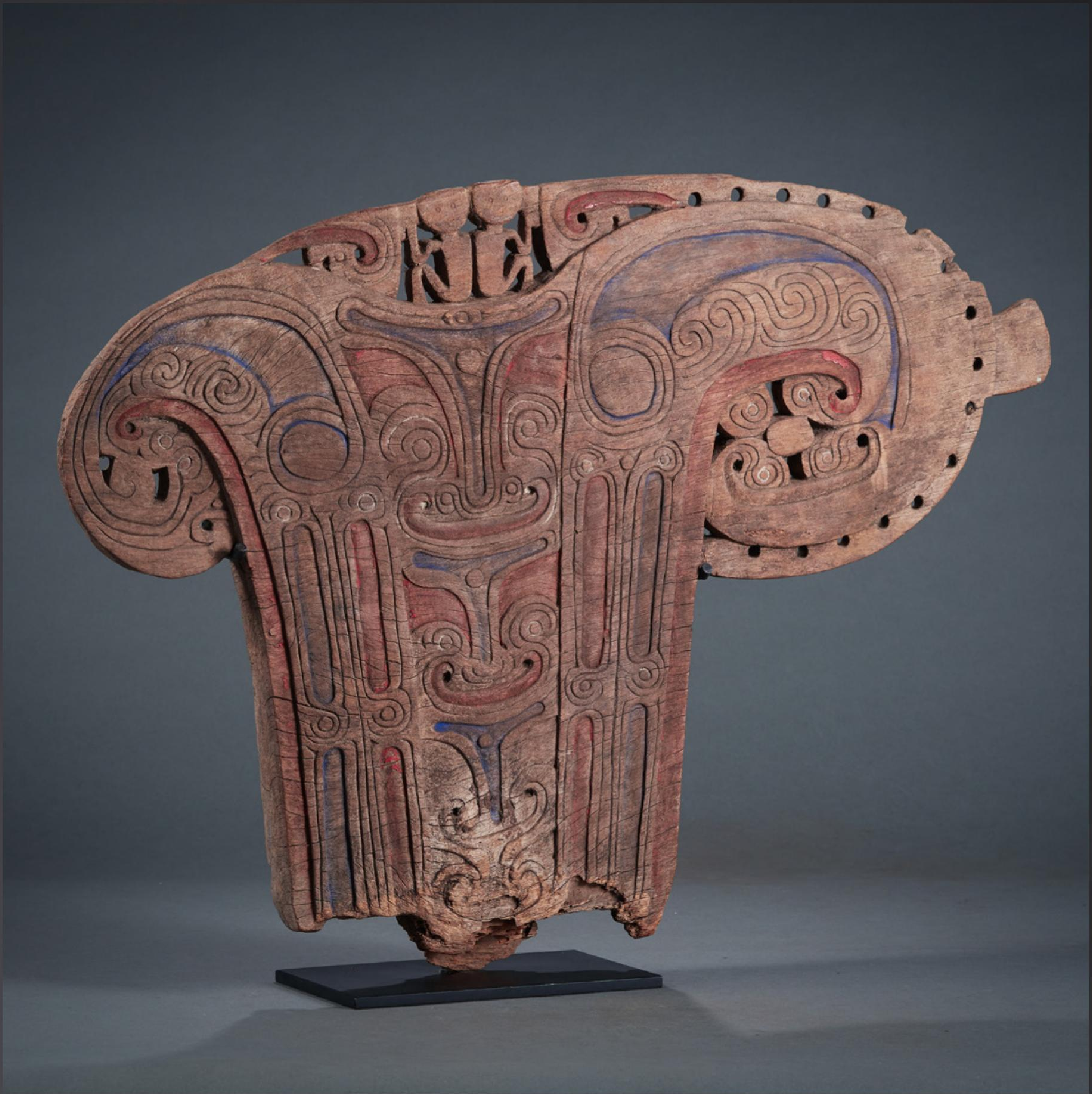
Splashboards are attached to the stem and stern of the large sailing canoes, used in the *kula* trade voyages. They are an integral part of the structure that builds up the higher sides of these canoes and functionally keep water from splashing inside. This example is asymmetrically dynamic, with a much larger curvilinear form on the right and smaller on the left, with two well-carved squatting figures between. They are always painted for voyages (much of which has worn away), and empowered with magic spells to make the trade and voyage more successful for the *kula* sponsor. The splashboard shows extensive wear and erosion on the back from many journeys at sea.

64 x 92 cm $ 3,000



Kula Canoe, trobriand islands
Photo; Jutta Malnic 1986

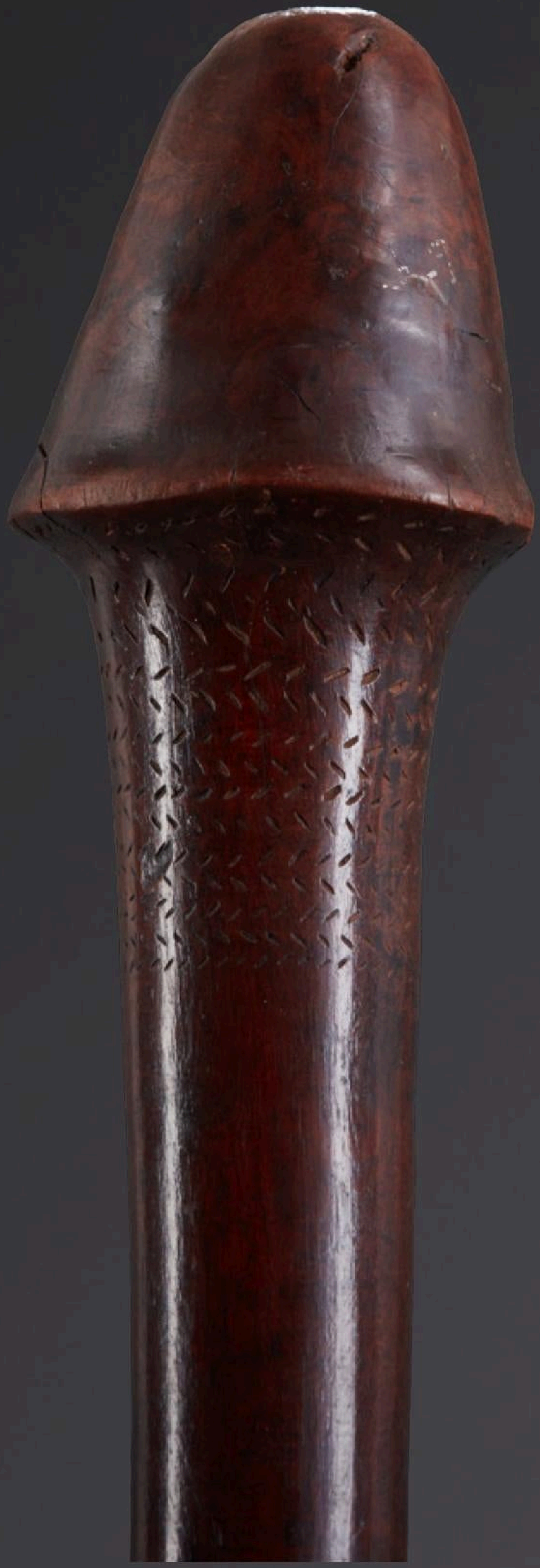


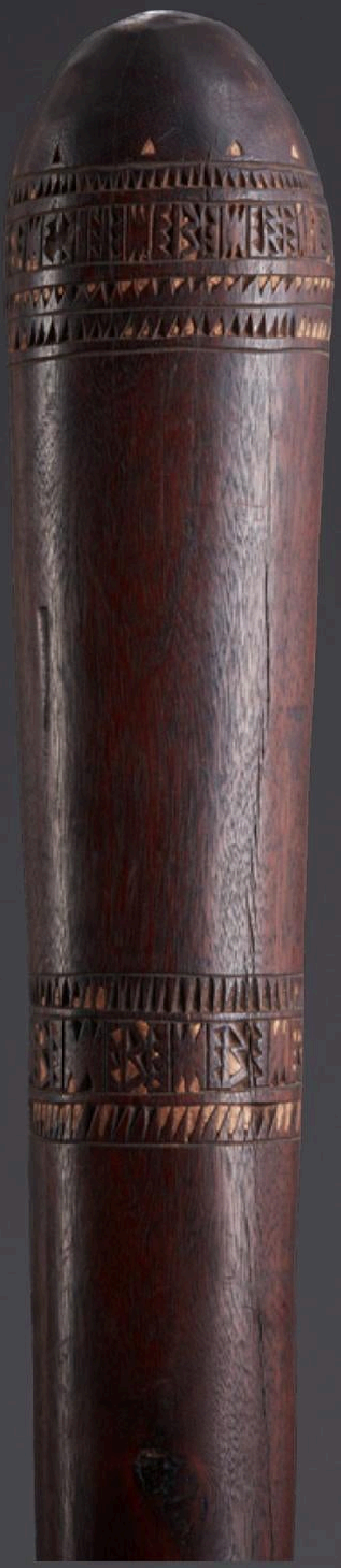


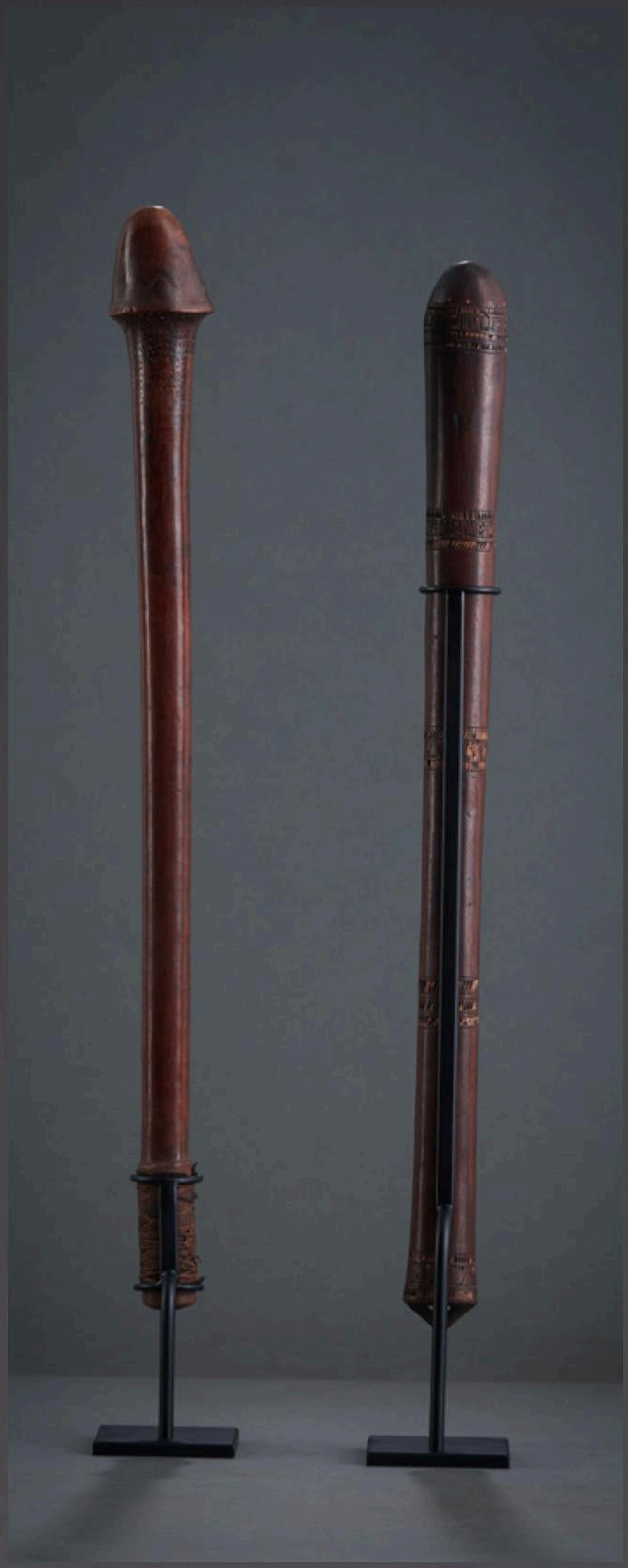
25. Two Oceanic Clubs, both 19th Century.

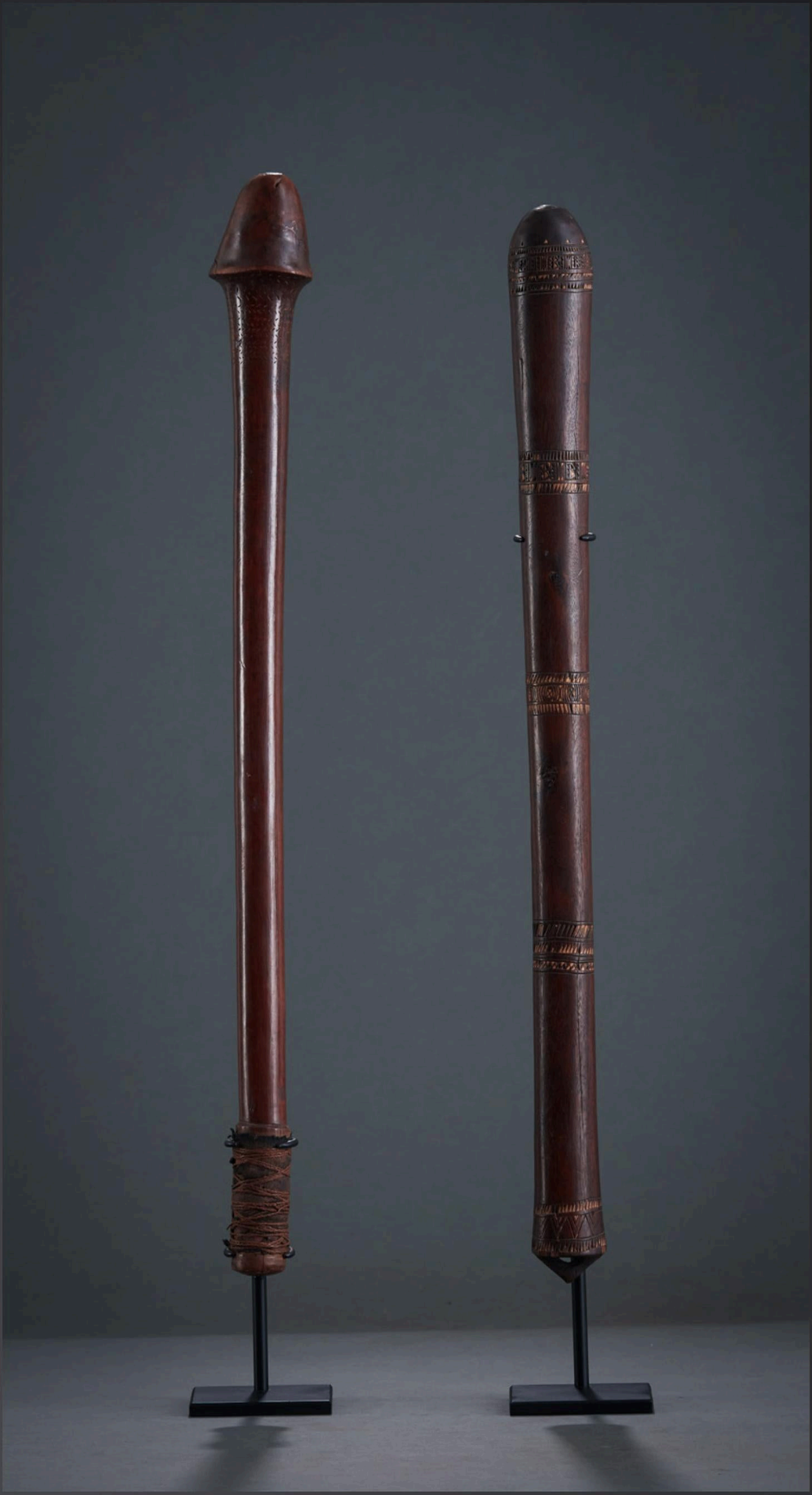
a) Penis-head club, *Kanak*, New Caledonia. Below the fine knob top are finely engraved with small geometric motifs. The base of the handle is bound with trade cloth and fibre. The last recorded use of clubs in warfare in New Caledonia was 1917.
This club pre-dates this by a generation or more.
76 x 8 cm $ 900

b) Pole club, *povai*, rounded-head, Samoa. The club has typical fine incising in tiny geometric patterns with traces of lime. The wood is very hard and heavy and has a wonderful shiny patina. These clubs were stored high in the house between wars, and when brought down for use, polished with coconut oil, and magic herbs rubbed in to give them added spiritual "power".
74 x 6 cm $ 850







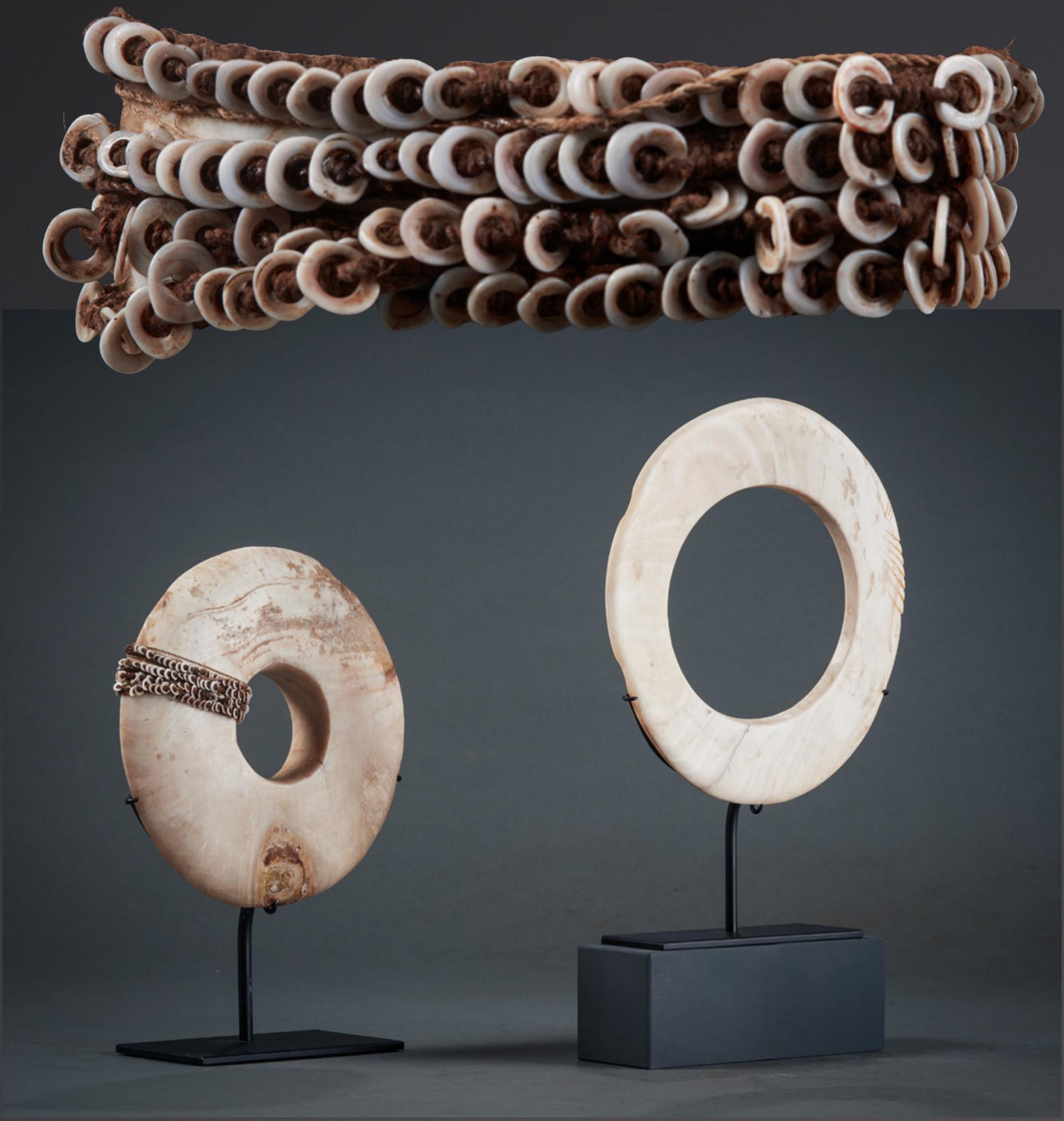


26.Giant Clamshell Rings, *Yua*, Yangoru, Prince Alexander Mountains, PNG

Yua are the most valuable and important wealth items of the Abelam and neighbouring Yangoru-Boiken. They are cut, using bamboo and sand, from fossilized clamshell; so, in essence, these objects are stone, not shell. They are of immense value on many levels; as bride price; as markers of prestige and in important exchanges at funerals or compensation payments.
Shell Rings are judged by their size and thickness, their colour, and the perfection of the central circle.

This Yua is very thick and heavy, with additional embellishment of nassa shell bands.
22 cm diameter x 3 cm thick. $ 2,000

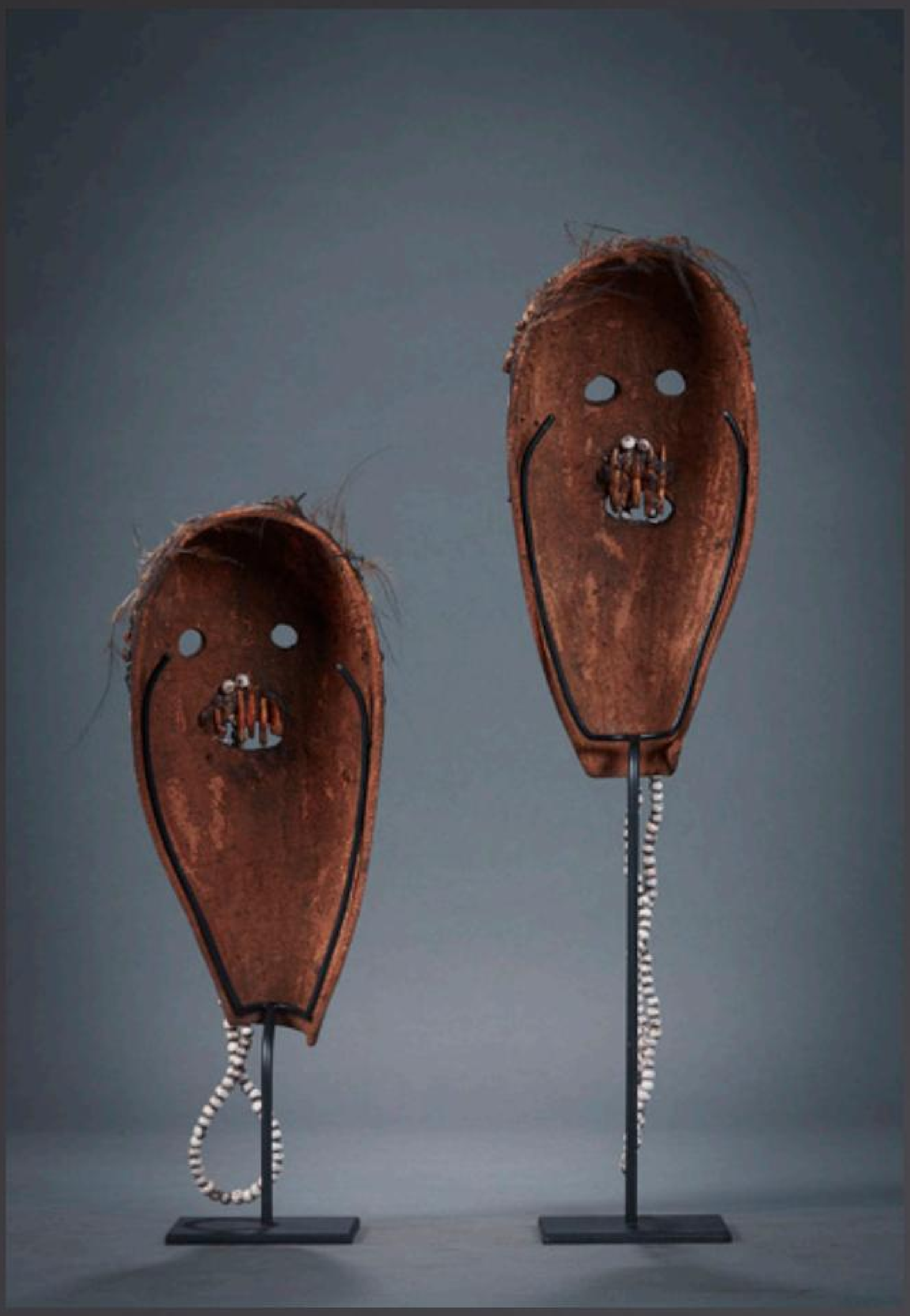
This Yua is very large, making it an important object, but lacks the thickness and weight of a).
28 cm diameter x 1 cm thick. $ 1,700

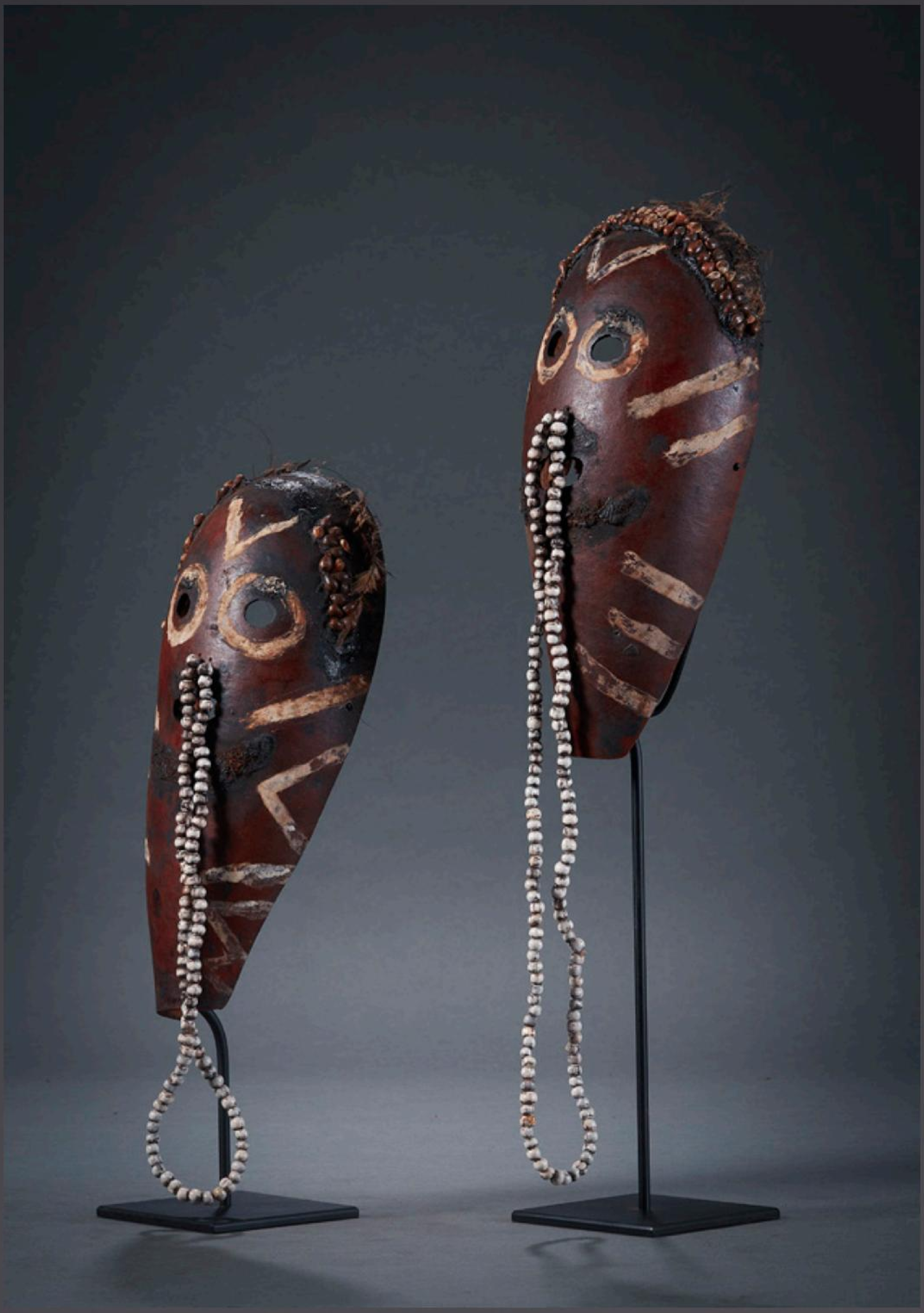


27. Two Gourd Masks, Henganofi District, Eastern Highlands, PNG

It is unusual to get two, almost matching gourd masks as they tend to be very individualistic. These gourd masks are made to represent spirits that dwell in the bush or mountains, and they are generally believed to be hostile to the living. They can represent specific spirits. One Kamano informant explained that some masks represent the evil spirits that 'cause' leprosy. These masks are worn by men, and they appeared in large village gatherings called krina in pantomime-type productions that told stories of life and the spirits; they were also used in the final performance at the Pig Killing Festivals. In some performances, these masked dancers moved erratically during the performance and often carried sticks or clubs to strike spectators who came too close.
These masks were made from old gourds previously used to hold water or oil.
The facial features are simple; holes for the eyes and mouth, with the nose and some features built up with resin. Coix seeds were often hung from the ears or nose – seeds associated with death, and hence the spirit world.
Both masks were collected by Helen Dennett at the Goroka Show in the early 1970s.

a) 31 x 14 x 8 cm	$ 1,800
b) 31 x 13 x 8 cm	$ 1,800

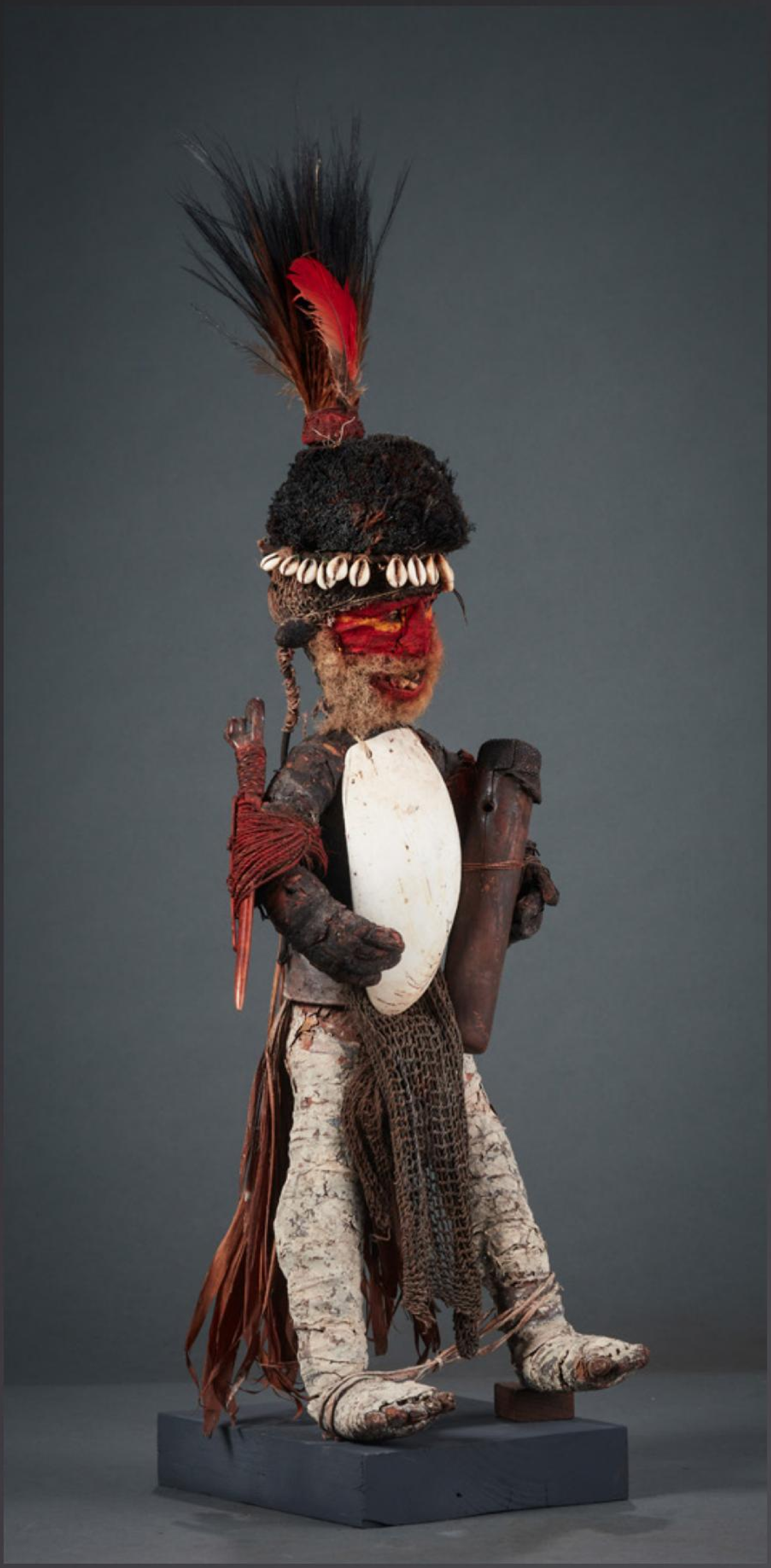


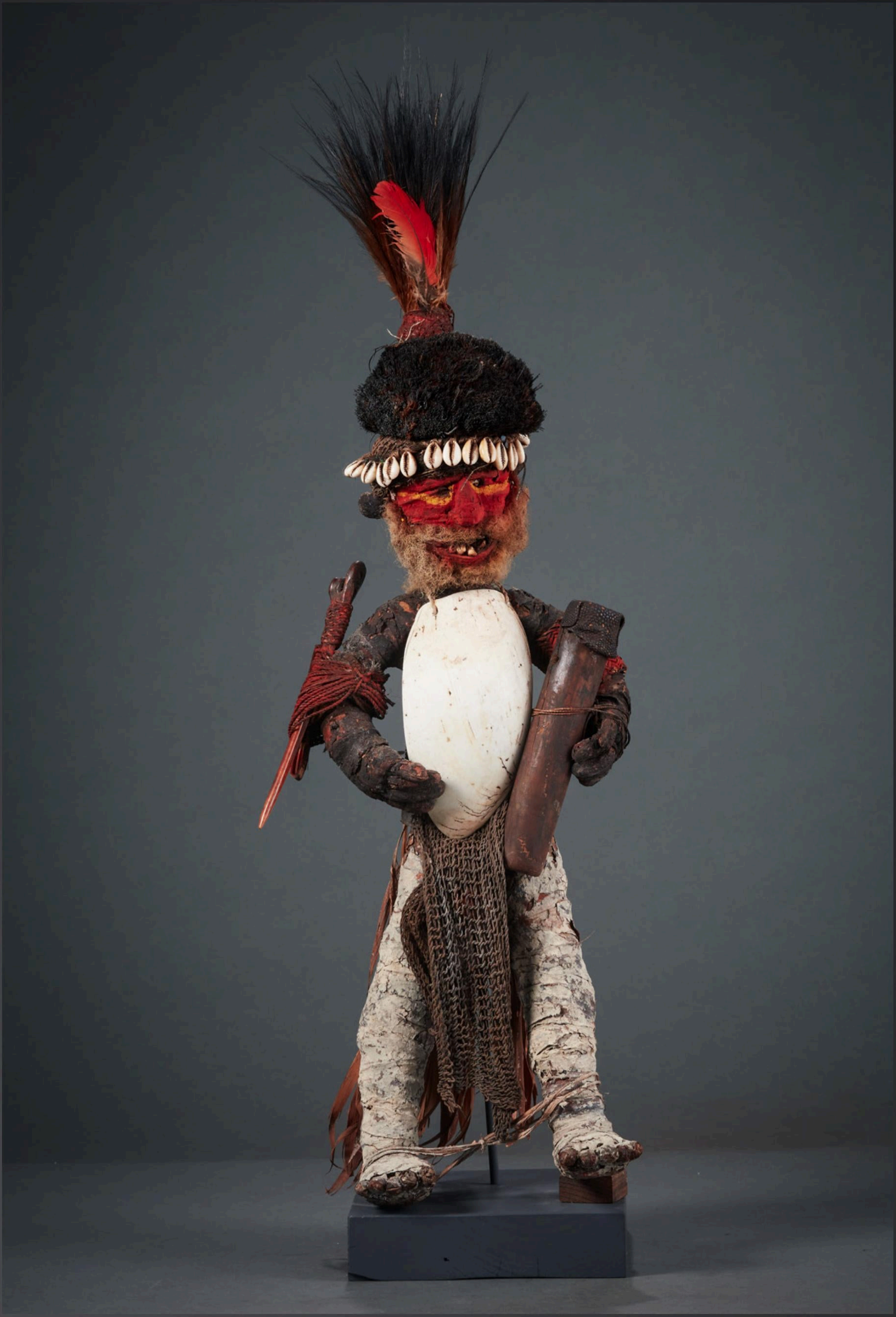


28. Ritual Figure, Mendi Valley, Southern Highlands, PNG

This is a large and elaborate version of the ritual figures that in early days became known as “Mendi dolls”, or “payback dolls” The term payback doll related to the early information that these figures represented somebody who was killed during tribal warfare, and this image reinforced revenge. In the Mendi Valley also, figures were carved or painted on their shields that projected this same sense of “revenge”. However, they had a more important function in pre-contact times where they were used in initiation rituals. They are made on a framework of wood or strong cane, then bound with other more pliant vegetable matter. A human form is made, then decorated as for ceremony, with painted face, shell jewellery and a headdress. This is a particularly large example of these Mendi figures and finely finished.
It was collected in late 1960s or early 1970s by Sydney artist Frank Hodgkinson. It remained in his collection for over 60 years.

89 x 28 cm **$ 950**

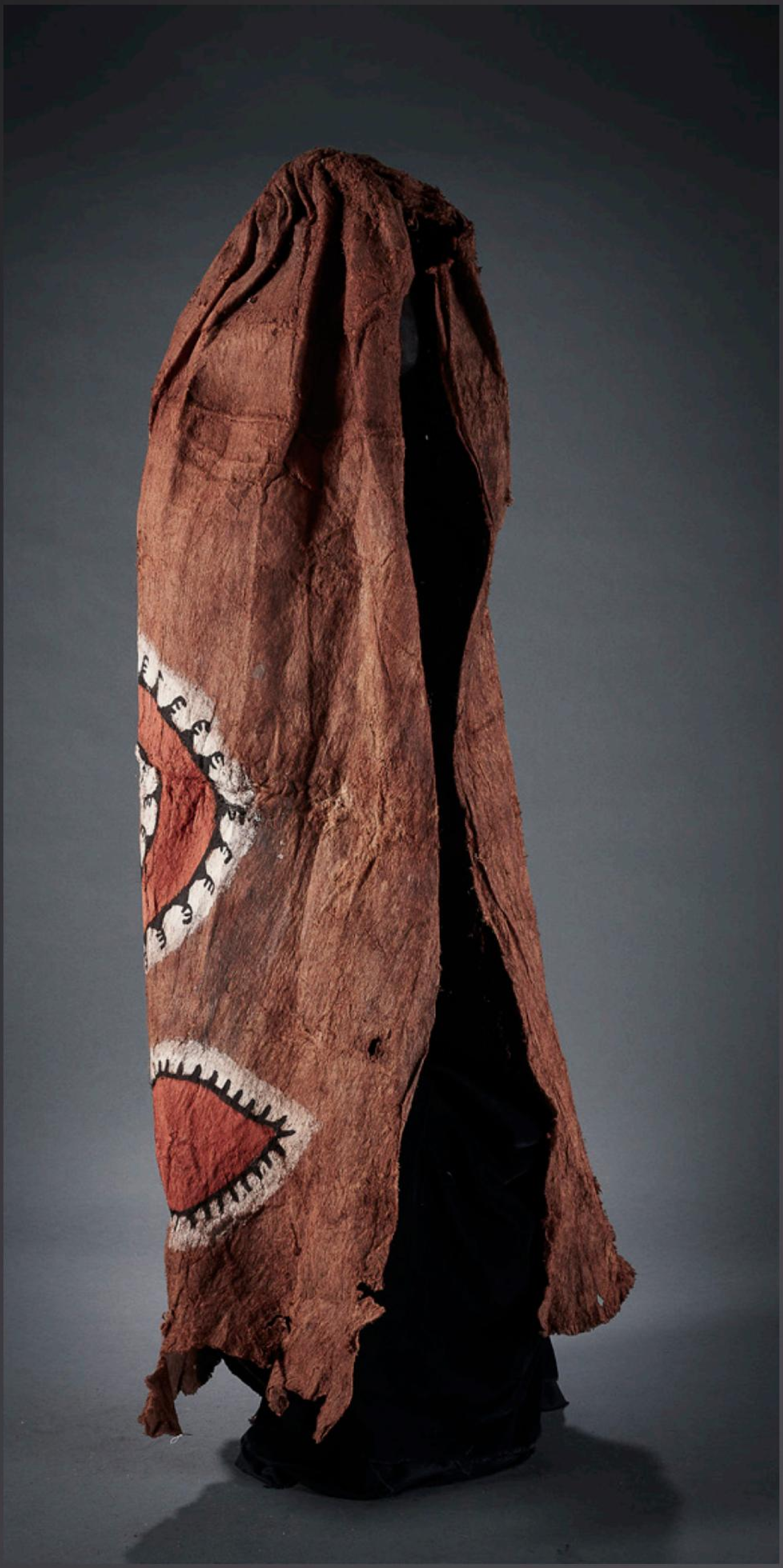




29. Ceremonial Dance Cape, *Fore* People, Eastern Highlands, PNG

Painted capes made of tree bark were traditionally used as part of the *krina* ceremony that involved large gatherings of politically connected clan groups from afar. Bark 'banners' were also painted and mounted on bamboo or cane frameworks that could be carried and danced with. The motifs are invariably related to nature, with certain animals and plants depicted. This cloak, an important one without doubt, depicts the large serpent of Creation Myth, with a shimmering glow. This cloak was collected in the 1980s by Kamda Kubo, a Kamano chief, when attending ceremonies among the *Fore* in the far southwest of the Eastern Highlands.

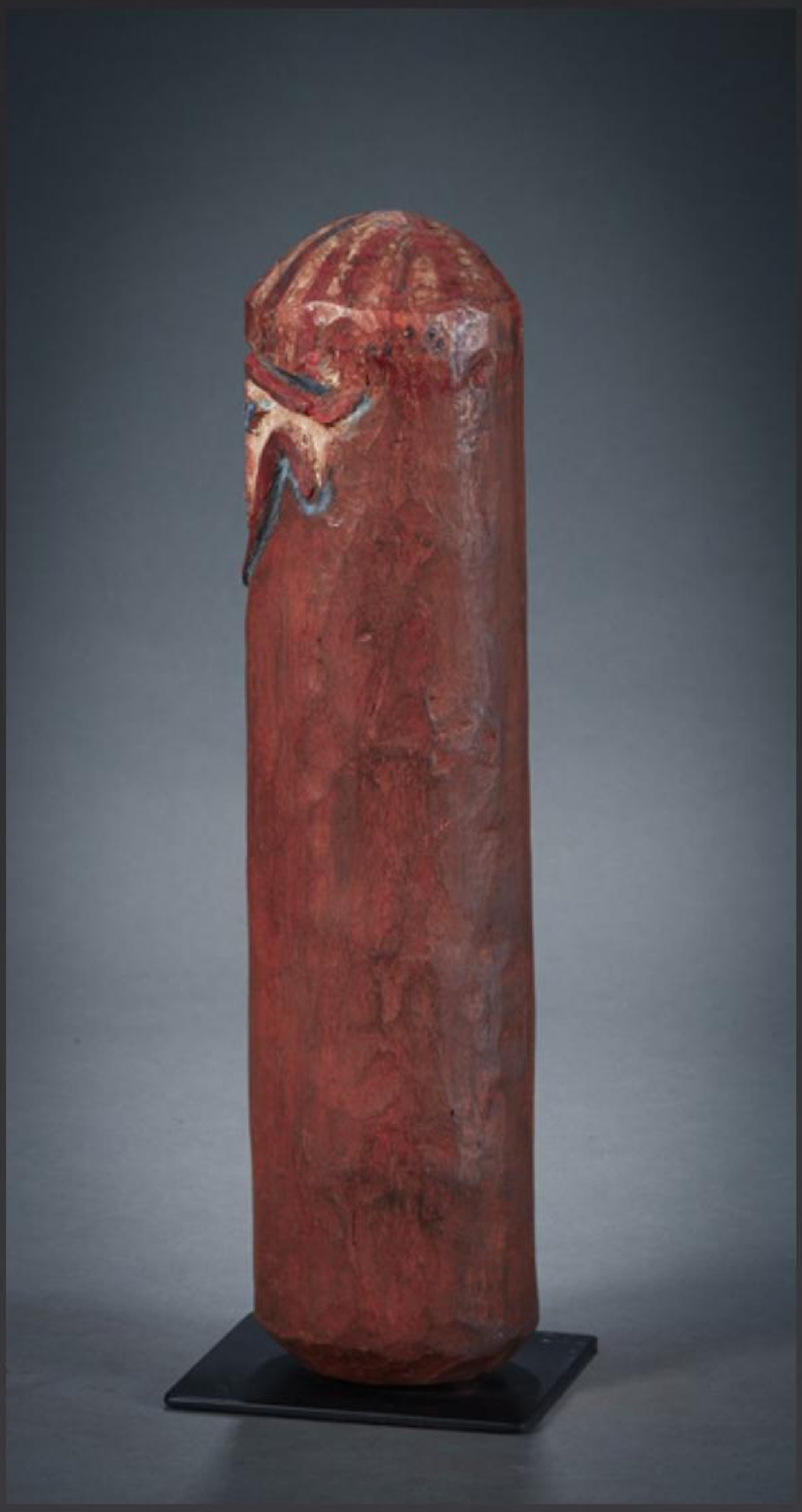
112 x 124 cm $ 2,800

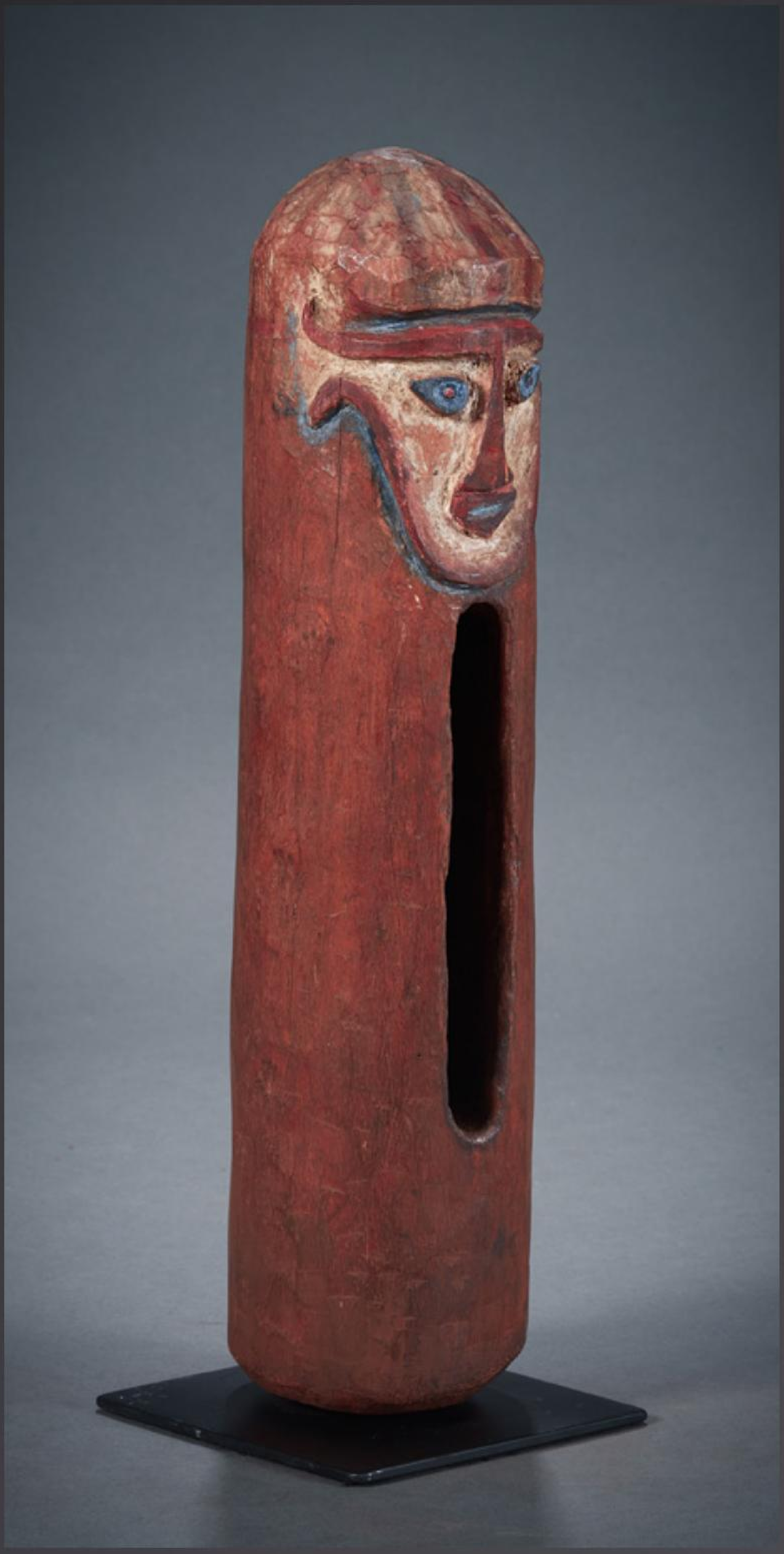


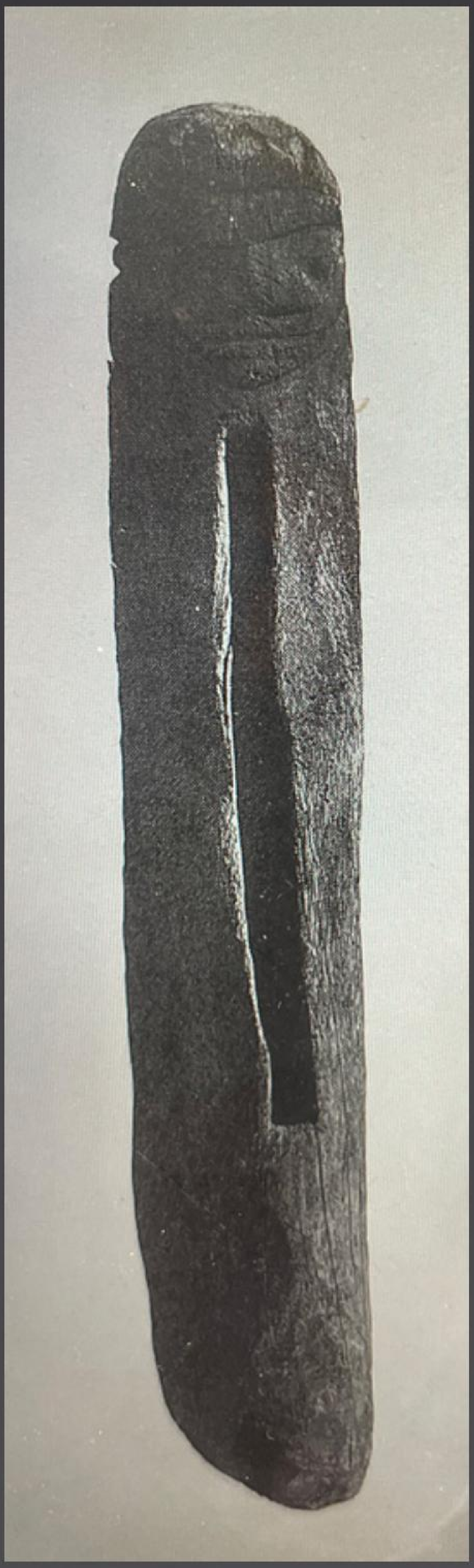
30. Personal Slit Gong, Vanuatu, early 20thC

Such small slit gongs are quite rare. One very similar drum is shown in Felix Spicer's book, “Ethnography of Vanuatu” by Felix Speiser and was collected during his 1910-1912 research period on Malekula Island. Such small drums would be for personal use rather than for use in a large ceremonial context. This drum is obviously old; the face is beautifully and abstractly carved with a face and domed head very similar to the Spicer example. There are layerings of paint, some of which are enamel. When it was collected is unknown, but it found its way into a Melbourne collection.

47 x 12 cm (diameter) $ 2,800





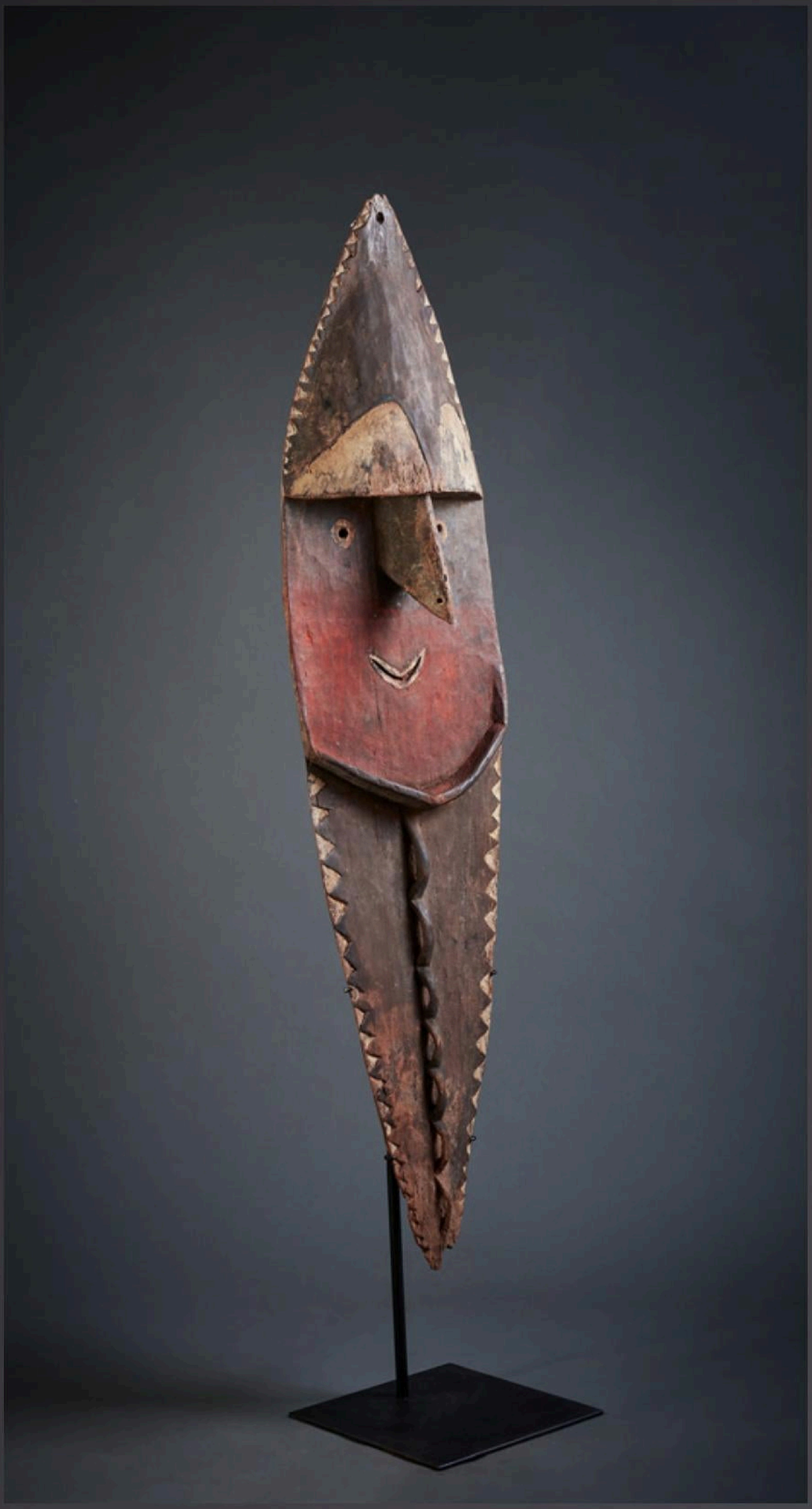


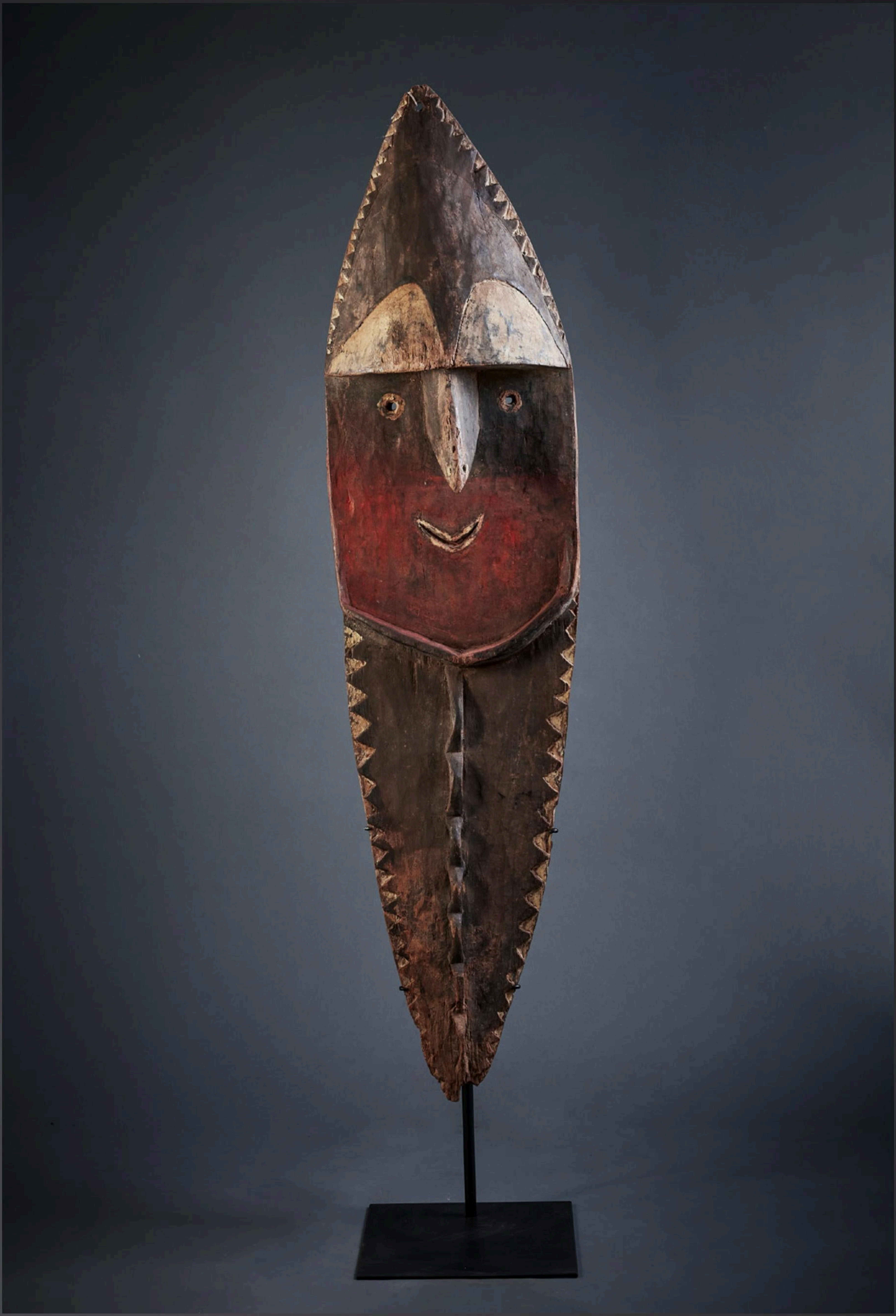
Personal slit gong, eastern Malekula.
108 cm
Collected by Felix Speiser 1910-1912.
Illustrated in “Ethnology of Vanuatu”, 1900, by Felix Speiser, Crawford House Press, Bathhurst, plate106.8.

31. Fertility Figure, *Mindja*, Washkuk Hills, Upper Sepik River, PNG

This is an old figure with a simplistic form when compared to others in museums, that give it a great strength and suggest it is an older *Minja* figure, probably dating back to the 1930s.
There is some dry rot at the base, no doubt from standing in a hidden bush house for many years. These figure, never to be seen by women, were stored between ceremonies in small huts, along male-only footpaths through the jungle. After harvest of the yams in the Washkuk Hills, there were traditionally three ceremonies – essentially fertility ceremonies, to ensure future abundance. The second of these was the *Minja* ceremony.
In its overall form and details, it is one of the simplest of *Minja's* to be found, and this is the source of its artistic strength. The eyes and mouth are pieced through; the strong nose has a pierced septum for attachment of ornaments during ceremony; the flat face has a simple, raised chin; the upper and lower areas are edged with small triangles.
There is a ticket still attached that reads "Amaki 1971". It came from an old Queensland collection, but a collector who never visited PNG. It must have been acquired in the early 1970s when this piece first returned to Australia.

141 x 35 x 14 cm $ 5,000



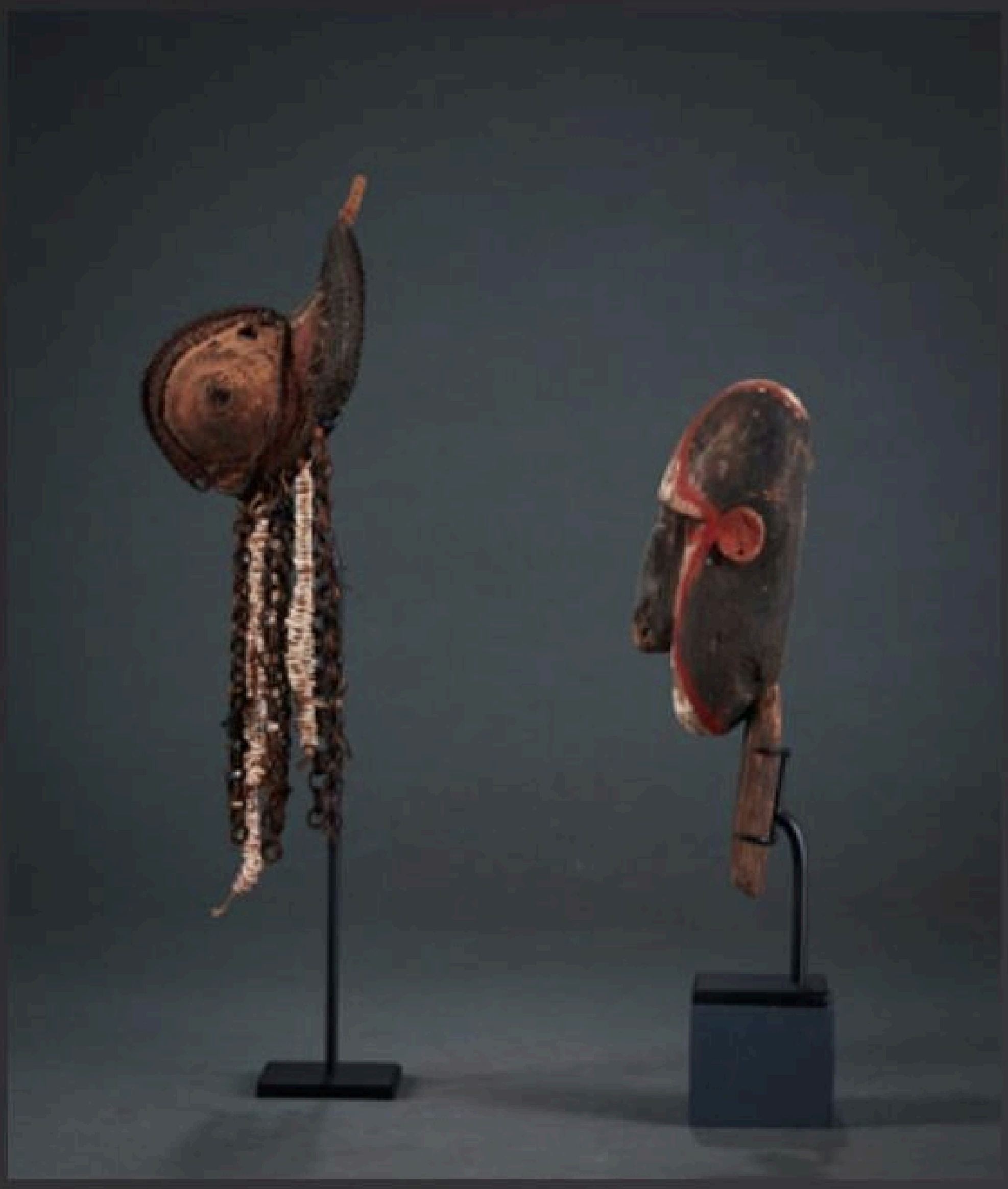


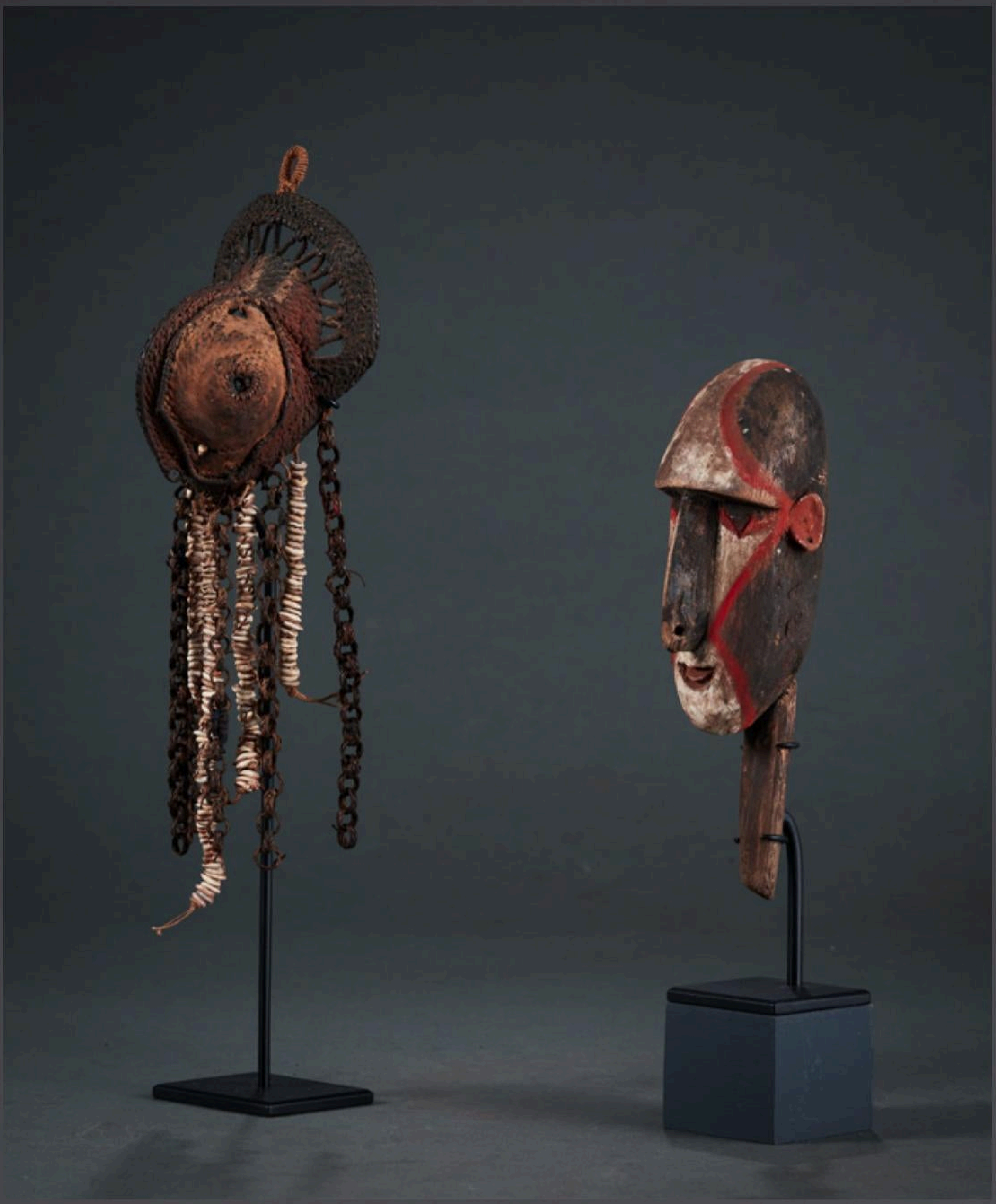
32. Abelam Yam Masks, Prince Alexander Mountains, PNG

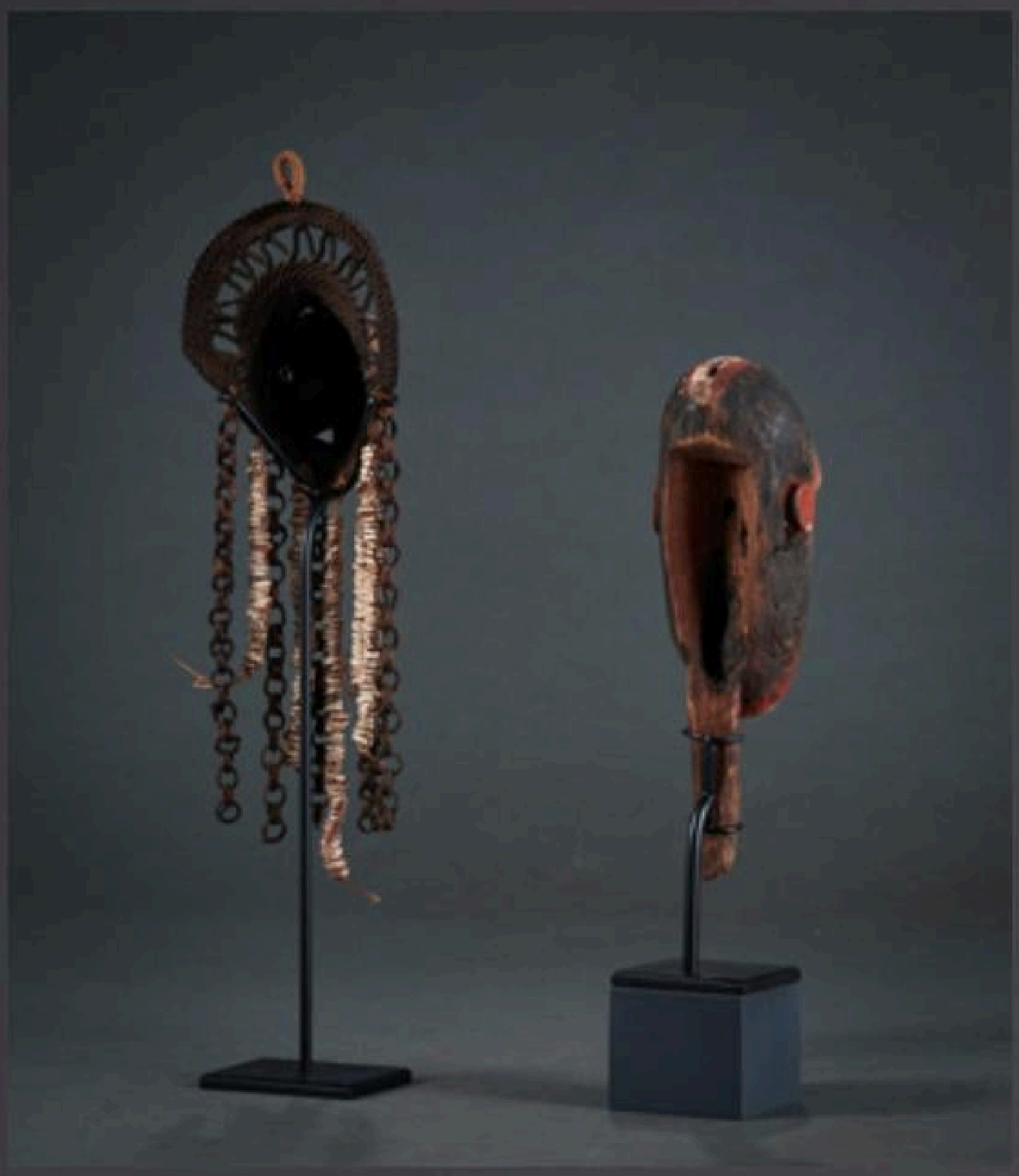
Both masks originate from the same important Hawaiian collection and were acquired in the 1960s in the Abelam region of PNG and have been in this collection ever since.

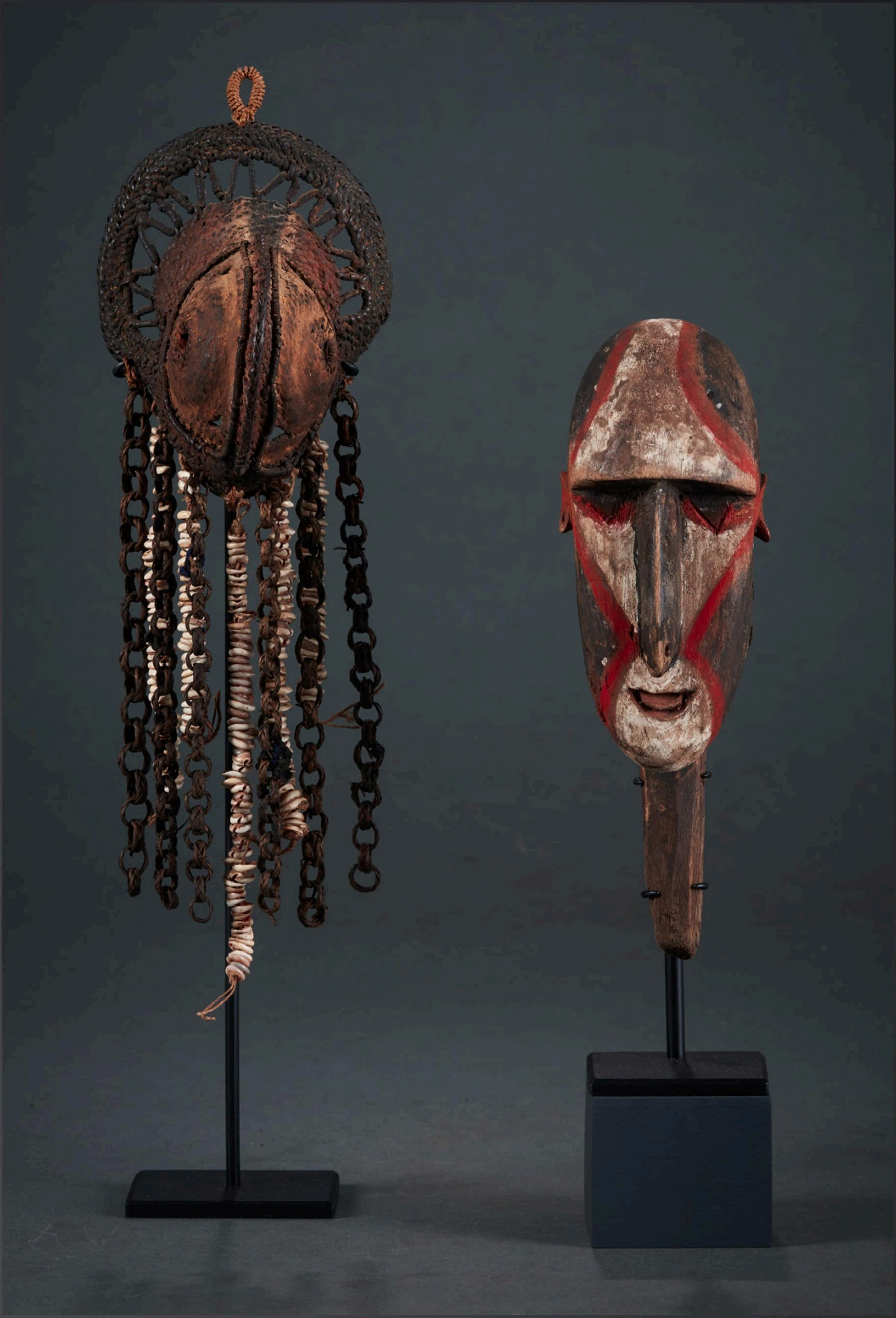
a) A small and very finely woven yam mask with subdued colouration, probably from being stored away for many years. What is extraordinary about this small mask is the shell and chain tassels attached along its lower edge. This is a rare and important yam mask.
32 x 11 x 10 cm $ 1,250

b) A small wood yam mask, obviously old and well-used. It is painted in simple colours, mainly red and white. The shaft suggests it is from the eastern Abelam or neighbouring Yangoru-Boiken people.
21 x 7 x 7 cm $ 650









33. Four Minature Yam Masks, Southern Abelam, PNG

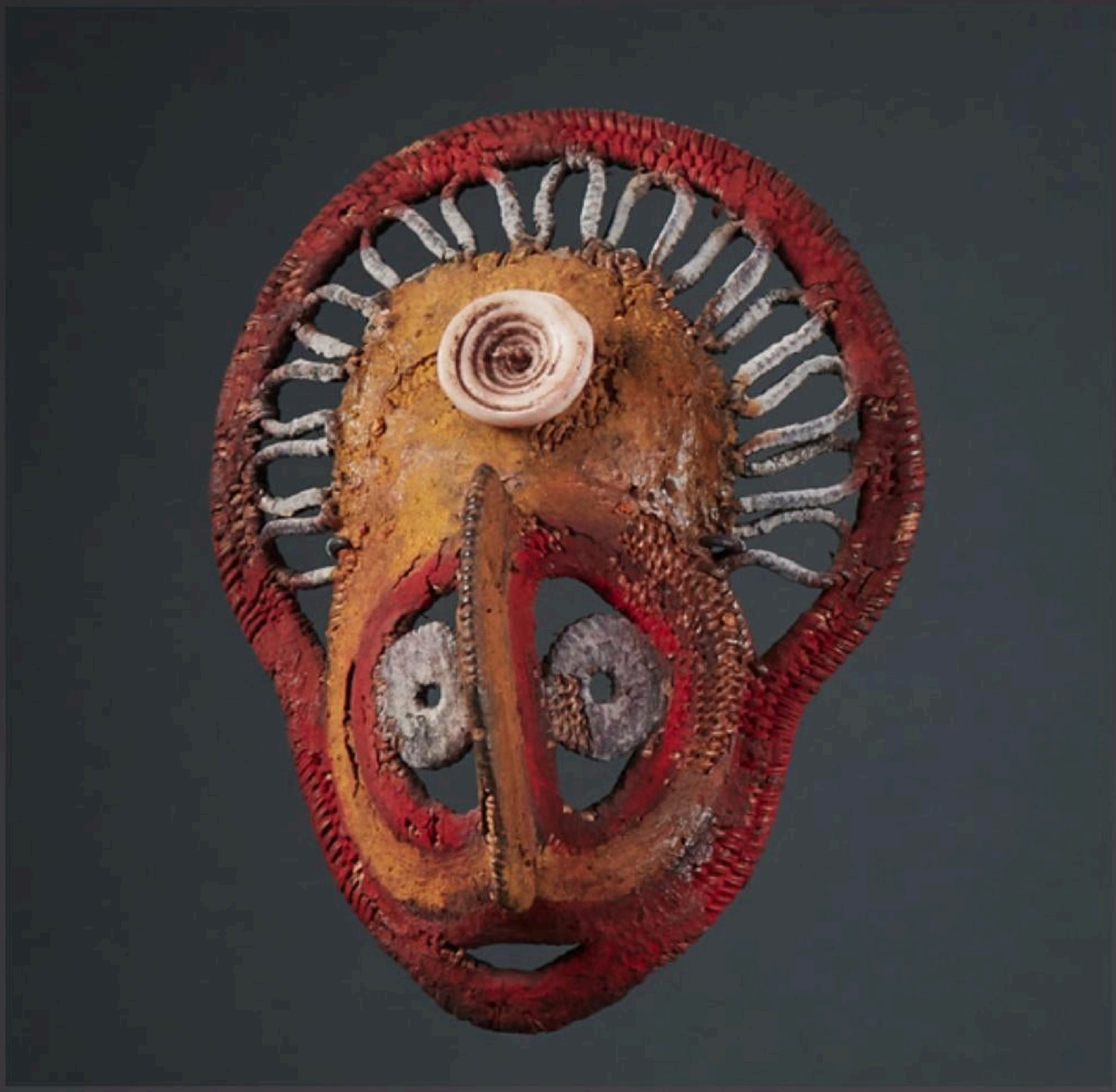
In the Yam Lining Ceremony of the Abelam, a large yam mask is generally attached to the yam tuber and becomes its “face”. Some yams, however, have multiple appendages that may resemble arms, legs, other heads etc. These smaller yam masks can be used on these other parts of the yam to further enhance its prestige. This ceremony occurred after harvest every year to ensure fertility of the gardens for the proceeding planting season.

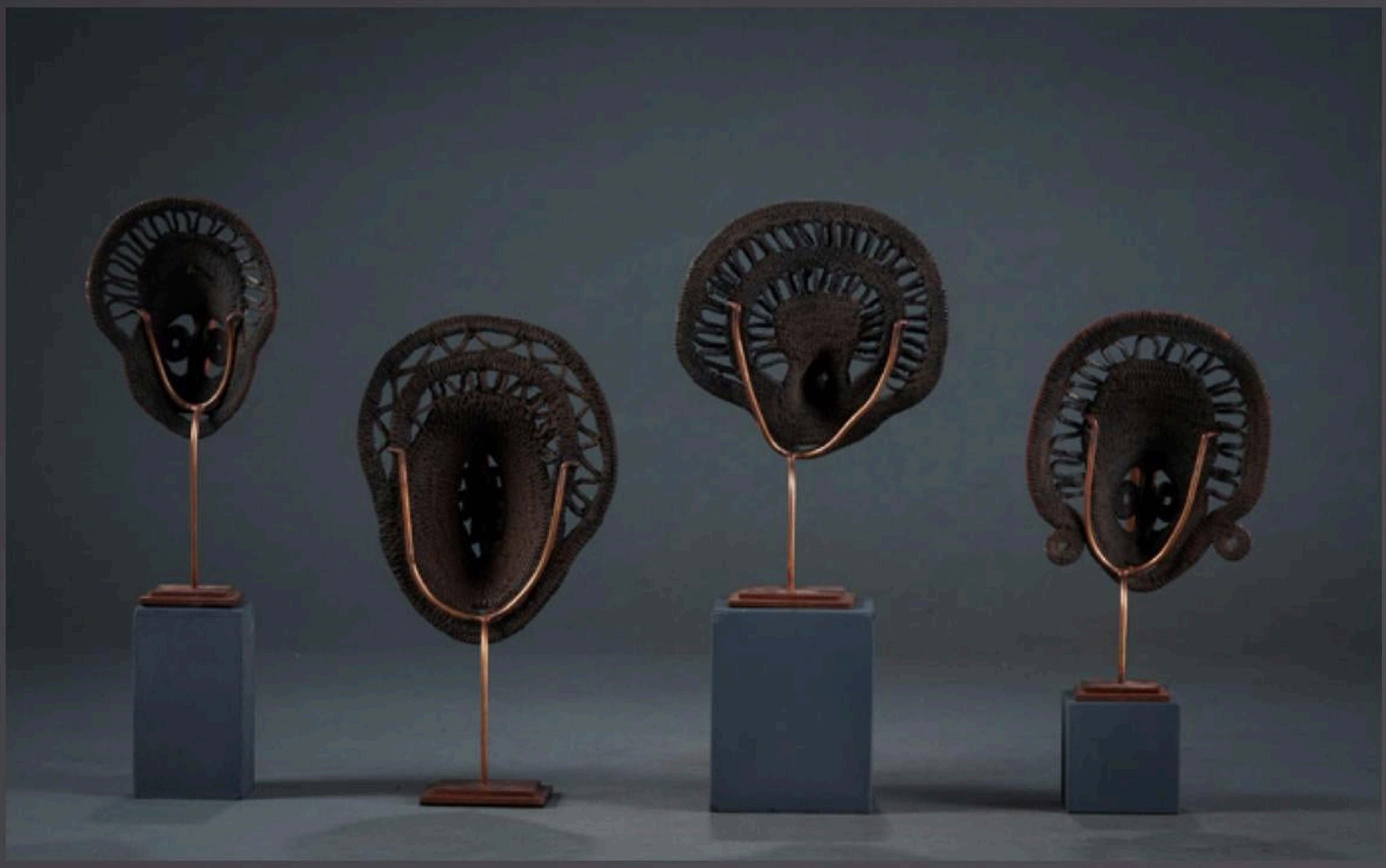
Finely woven small yam mask, with conus shell attachment. 12 x 10 cm $ 400

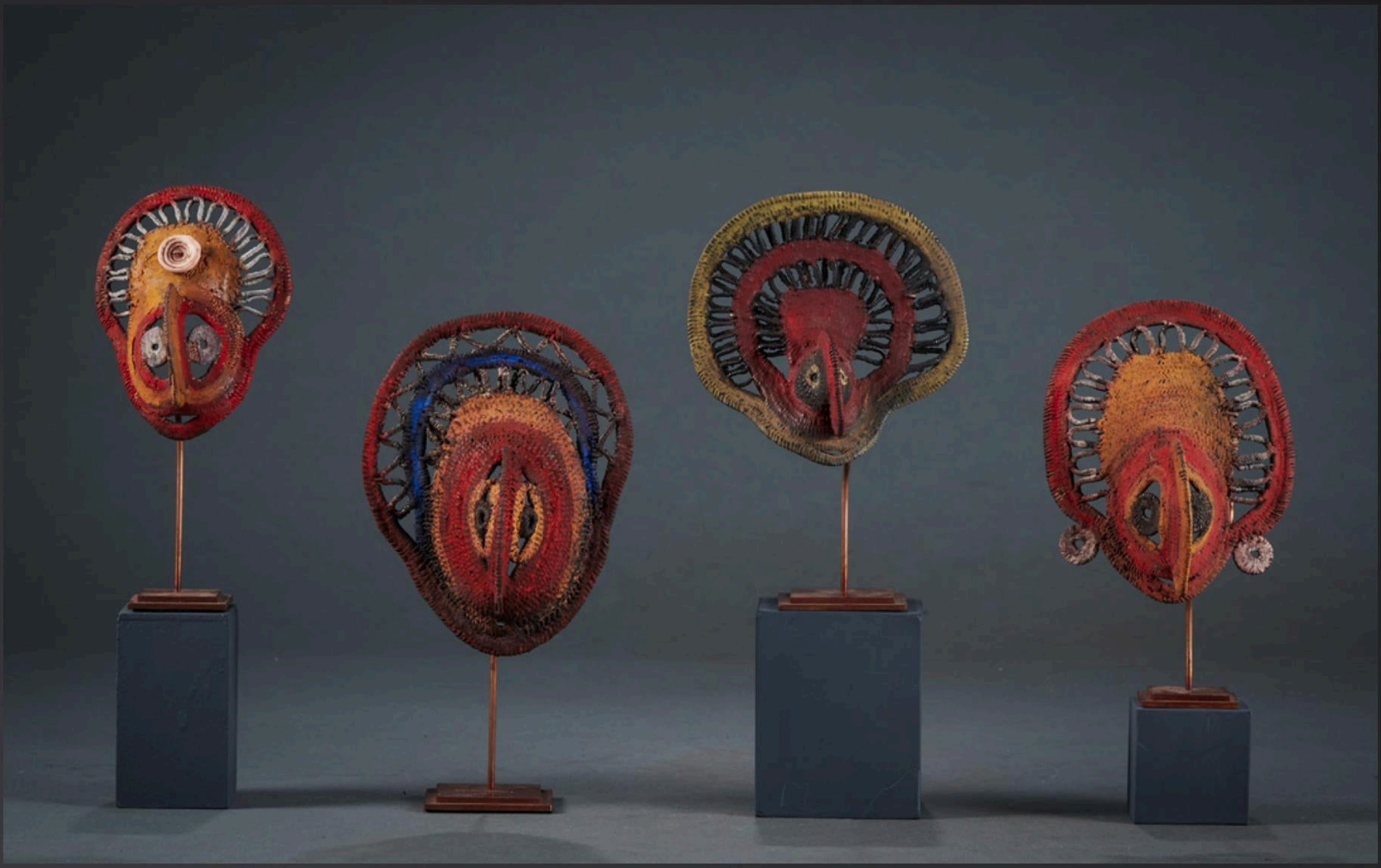
Finely woven small yam mask, with distinctive blue colour 17 x 13 cm $ 400

Finely woven small yam mask, red and green colouration. 14 x 14 cm $ 400

Finely woven small yam mask, mainly red and yellow coloration. 15 x 12 cm $ 400







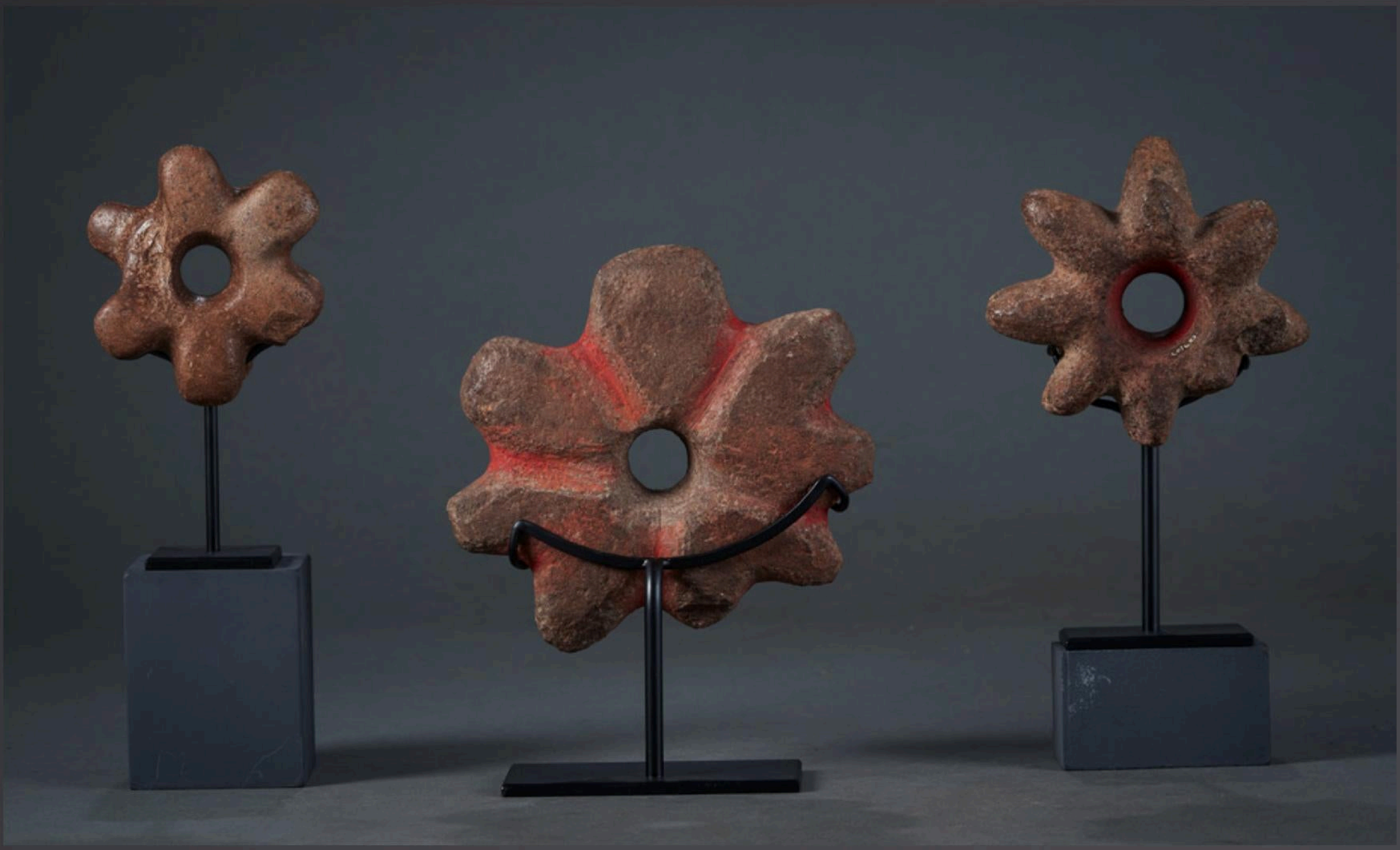
34. Three Prehistoric Star Club Heads New Guinea Highlands, PNG

In the distant past in the Highlands of New Guinea, stone club heads were used widely. At contact (1930s) the *Baruya* of the eastern Highlands continued to use stone clubs in warfare. However, in much of the Highlands region use of stone clubs in warfare was obsolete; perhaps the more efficient and deadly stone axes replaced them? But what occurred, these club heads became objects of magic, sometimes painted, and often use in fertility rituals or male or female spirit ceremonies. The first two club heads are from an old important Hawaiian collection.

a) Double Star Club head, hard volcanic stone. Wahgi Valley.
12.5 diameter x 5 cm $ 900

b) Large Star Club painted red with underlying orange pigments,
Baruya people, Eastern Highlands.
21 diameter x 4 cm $ 750

c) Double Star Club Head, New Guinea Highlands. Ex-Leo Fleishmann coll, Sydney LF/L53.
14 diameter x 7 cm $ 900



35. Five Prehistoric Greenstone Adze Blades, PNG

All five adze blades have been selected because of their colour and wonderful form. While pre-contact stone adzes were great working tools with many functions, the best and most beautiful also became objects of trade and wealth. Each of these blades would have been considered “special” within their communities because of their aesthetic qualities.

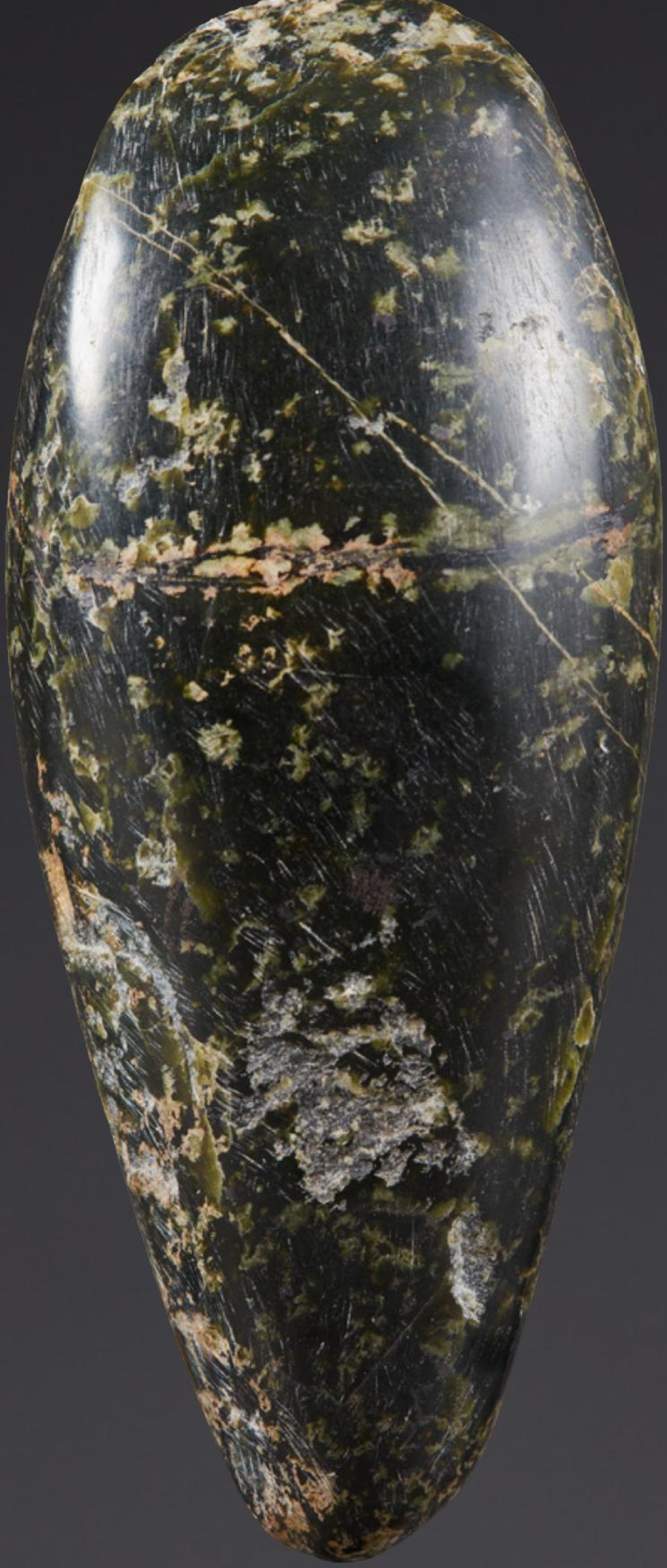
a) Long, elegant and pale green adze head, in fine condition. Wahgi Valley, Papua New Guinea Highlands. Stone: Metamorphic, hornfels.
25 x 7 x 3cm $ 500

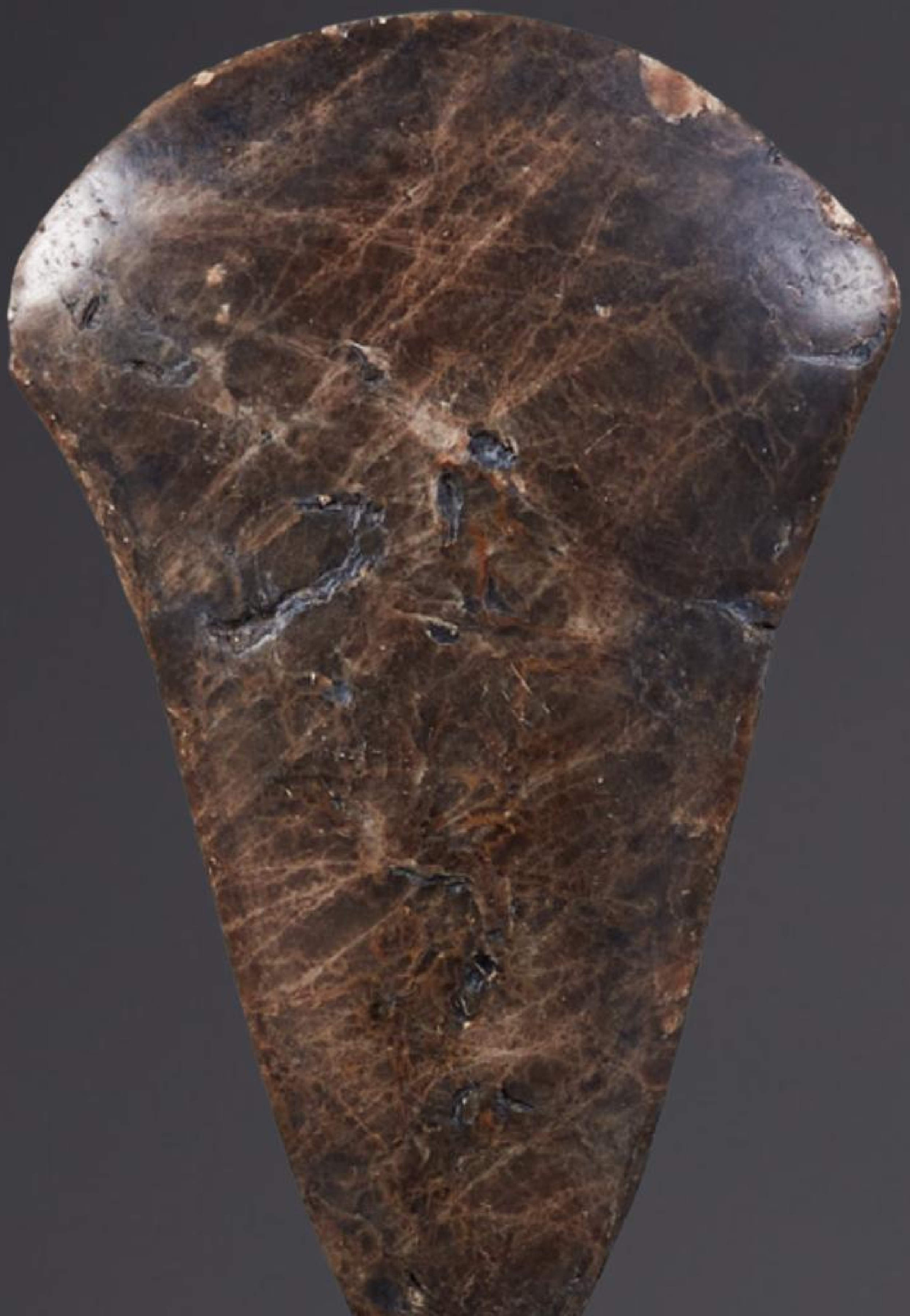
b) A robust adze with curved top edge; dark green with white veins, Lake Sentani, West Papua, Indonesia. Stone: serpentinite.
15.5 x 5 x 3.5 cm $ 400

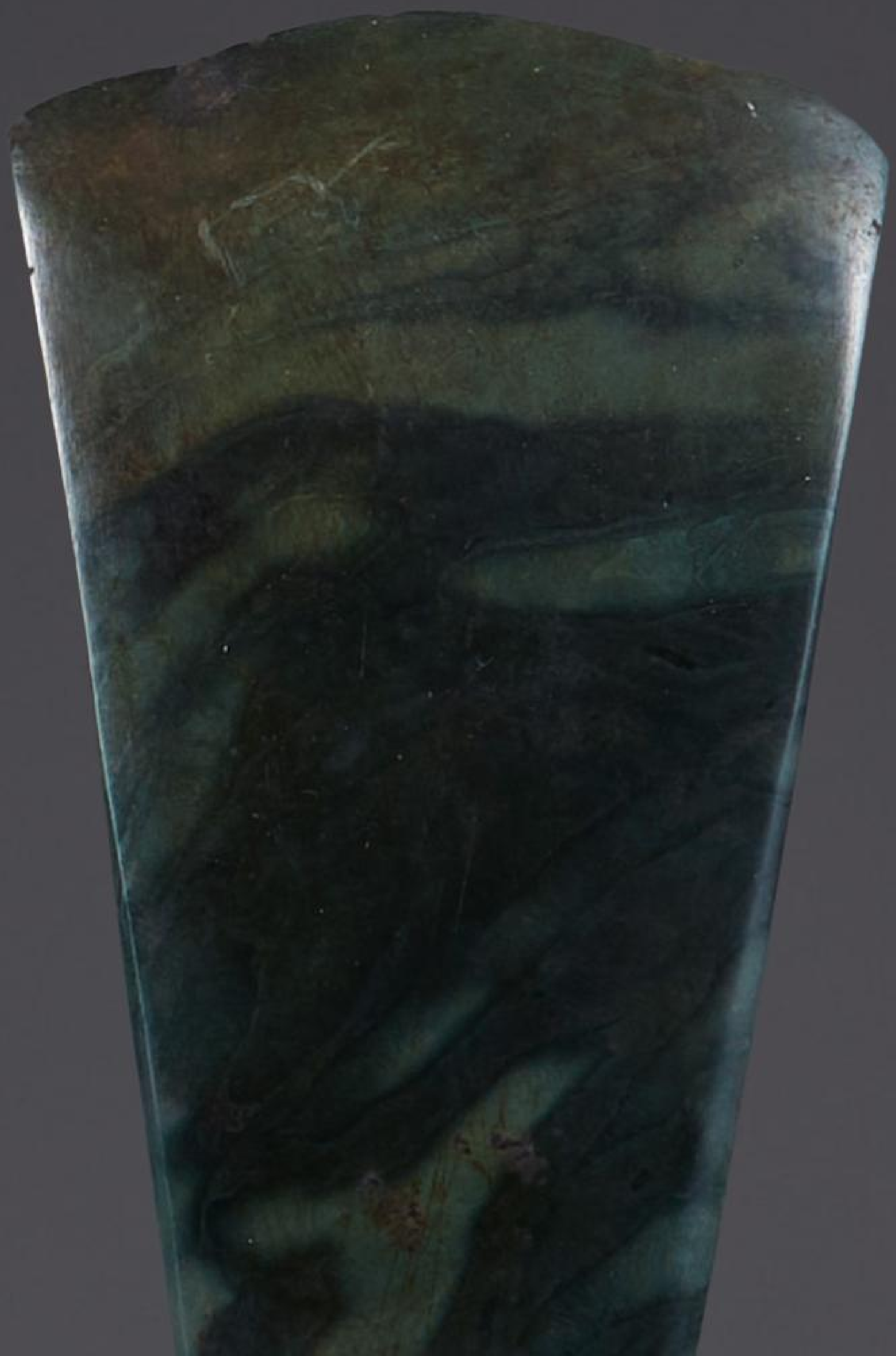
c) Flared adze with curved blade, light chocolate in colour with veins, Witu Islands, New Britain. Stone: quartzite.
14 x 9 x 3 cm. $ 450

d) A bulbous and finely rounded top edge; dark green with white veins; Lake Sentani, West Papua, Indonesia. Stone: serpentinite.
16 x 6.5 x 3.5 cm $ 600

e) Strong adze form with squared sides and slightly curved top edge, Witu Islands, New Britain, PNG. Stone: metamorphic.
13 x 6.5 x 3 cm $ 450







36. Three Ancient Large Churringas

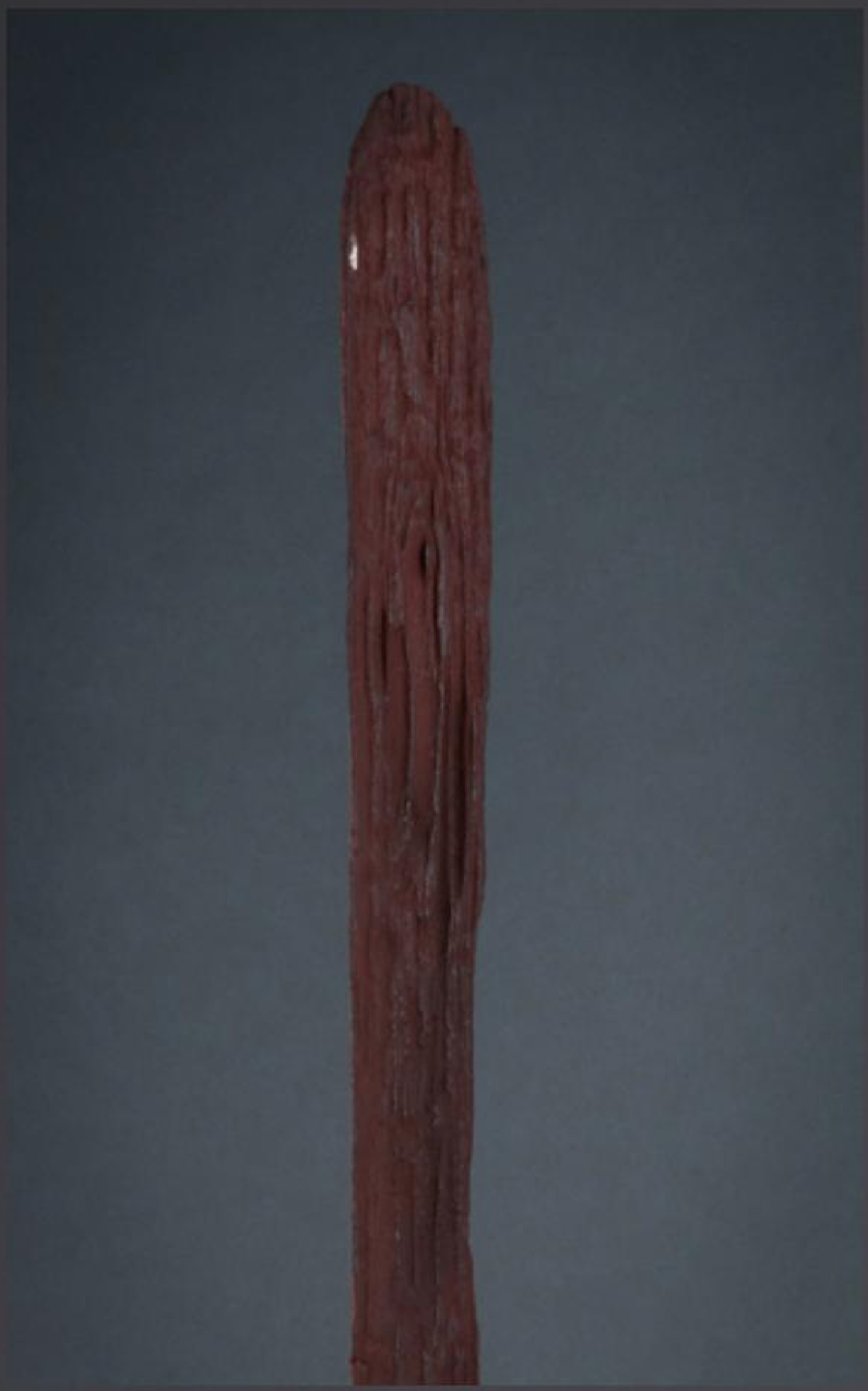
Churringas hold information within their carved form about ceremony and landscape. These three tall churringas each almost six feet tall, were in the collection of William Dunmall who displayed them in his private museum, *Urimbirra,* at Harvey Bay in Queensland from the early 1970s. He acquired them from Ray Williams at Anna Plains station in the Kimberly region of Western Australia. Ray Williams worked on many of the cattle stations across Australia as a "fixer" and he had an abiding interest in collecting any convict historical objects and also asking Aboriginal people he worked with to find old artifacts for him. Dunmall also worked on many stations across northern Australia in the 1960s and acquired many things from Ray Williams either buying or trading for convict objects.

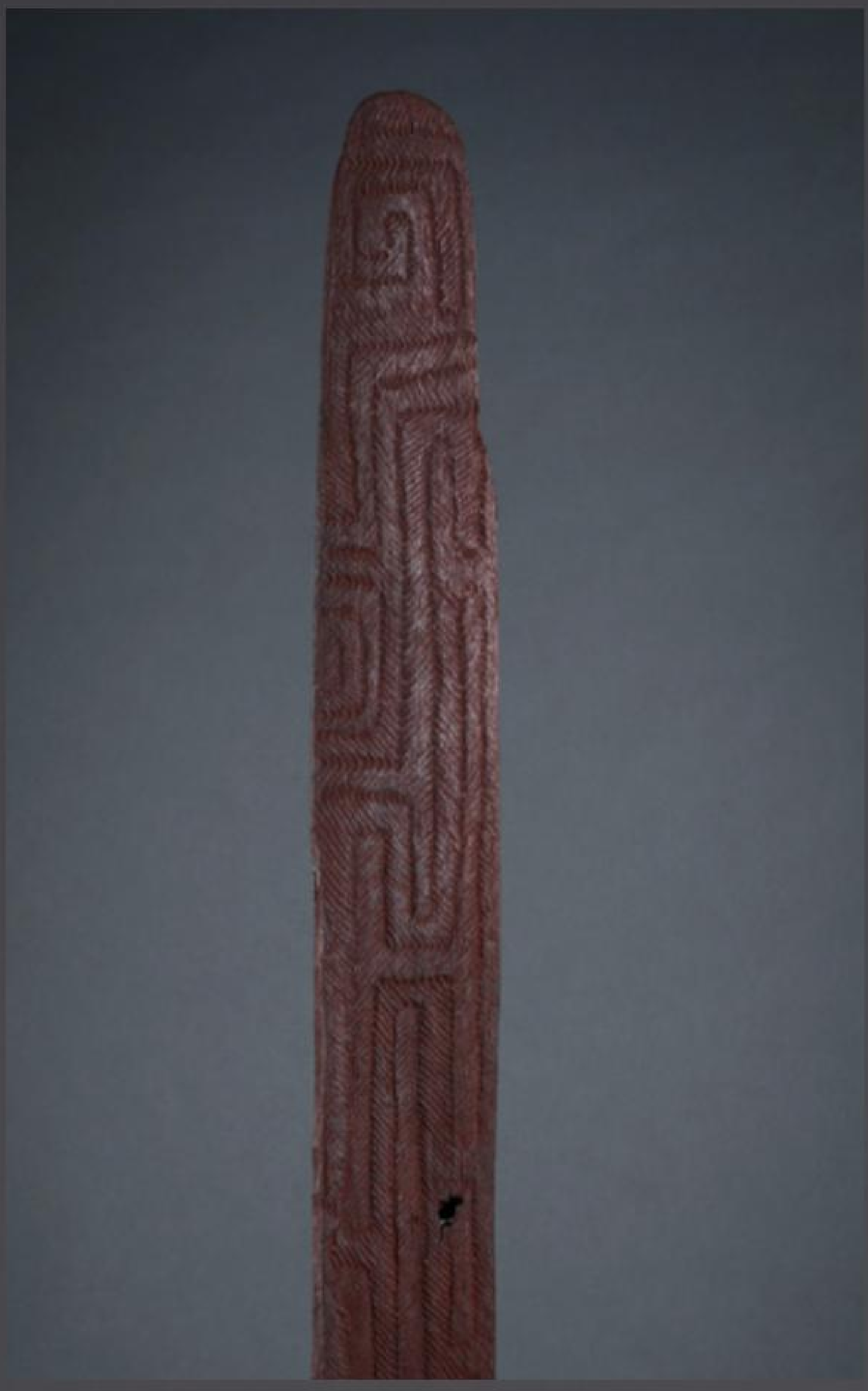
All these churringas are ancient, all are carved in hardwood, and very finely engraved. The two on the left must be 200 years old, or almost certainly more. Harwood does not deteriorate like this except over a long period of time.

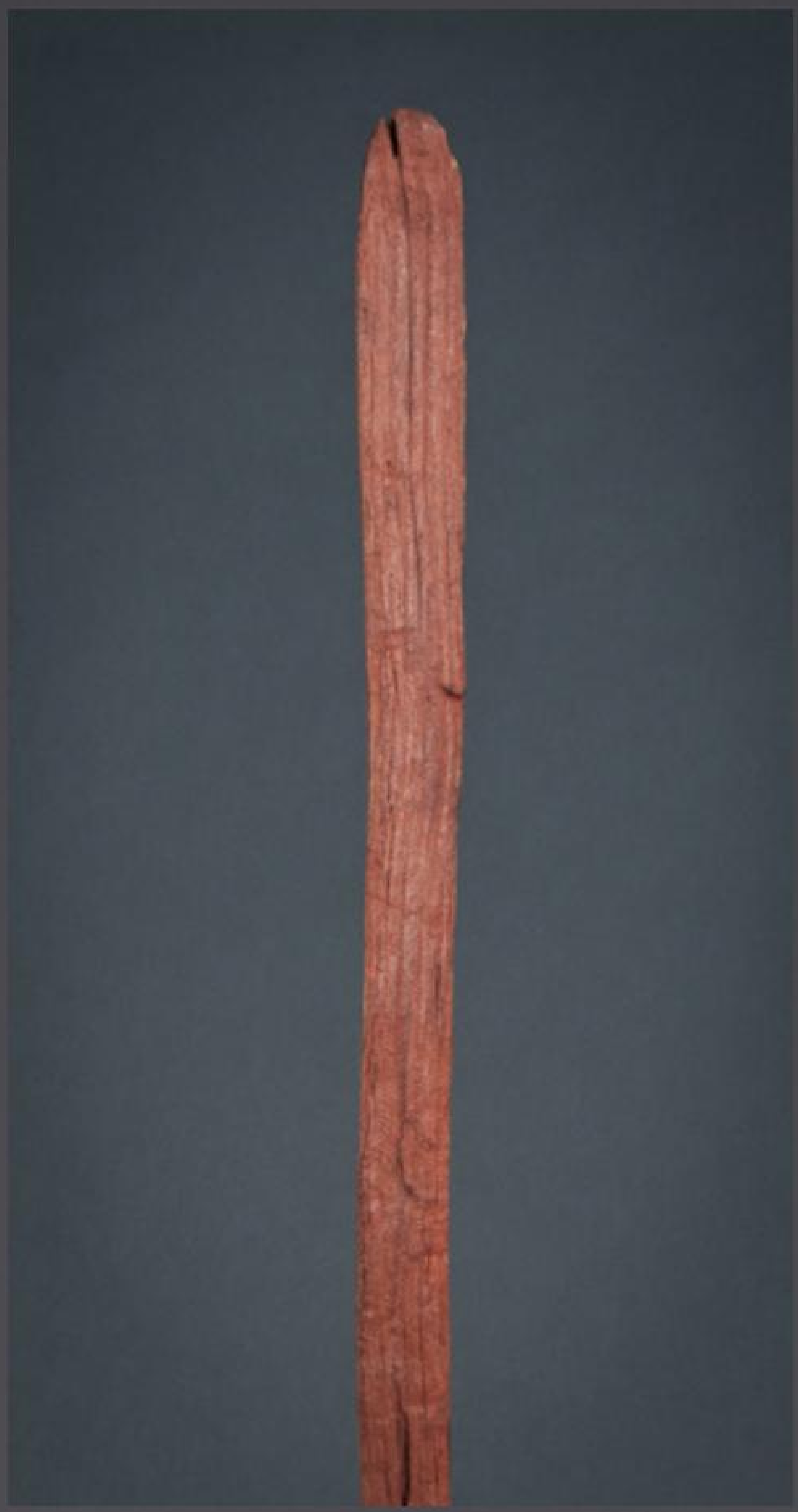
The full length is engraved with the inter-locking motifs that are typical of Kimberly designs. Each inter-locking element is then finely engraved with diagonal lines, now quite worn and ancient. It is covered in red ochre on the front and also the un-engraved back.
Dunmall's catalogue number "010"
174 x 8 cm $ 3,000

Like as above, the full length of this ancient piece is engraved with the typical inter-locking motifs, then very fine diagonal lines within. This is probably the most ancient of these three churinga, still substantially intact, but showing areas that have simply disappeared with age. "Hooks" have formed on this piece, possibly where the wood was softer or thinner, giving it a quite ethereal feel. It is covered in a dark red pigment on the front and the un-engraved back.
Danumall's catalogue number "011"
173 x 8.5 cm $ 3,500

c) This is a beautiful, sinuous piece, wider at the top and almost pointed at the base. The front is covered in small delicate chevron engravings or, probably more precisely, undulating lines across the front that suggest water or waves. Dunmall's catalogue number "012'
164 x 7 cm $ 2,800







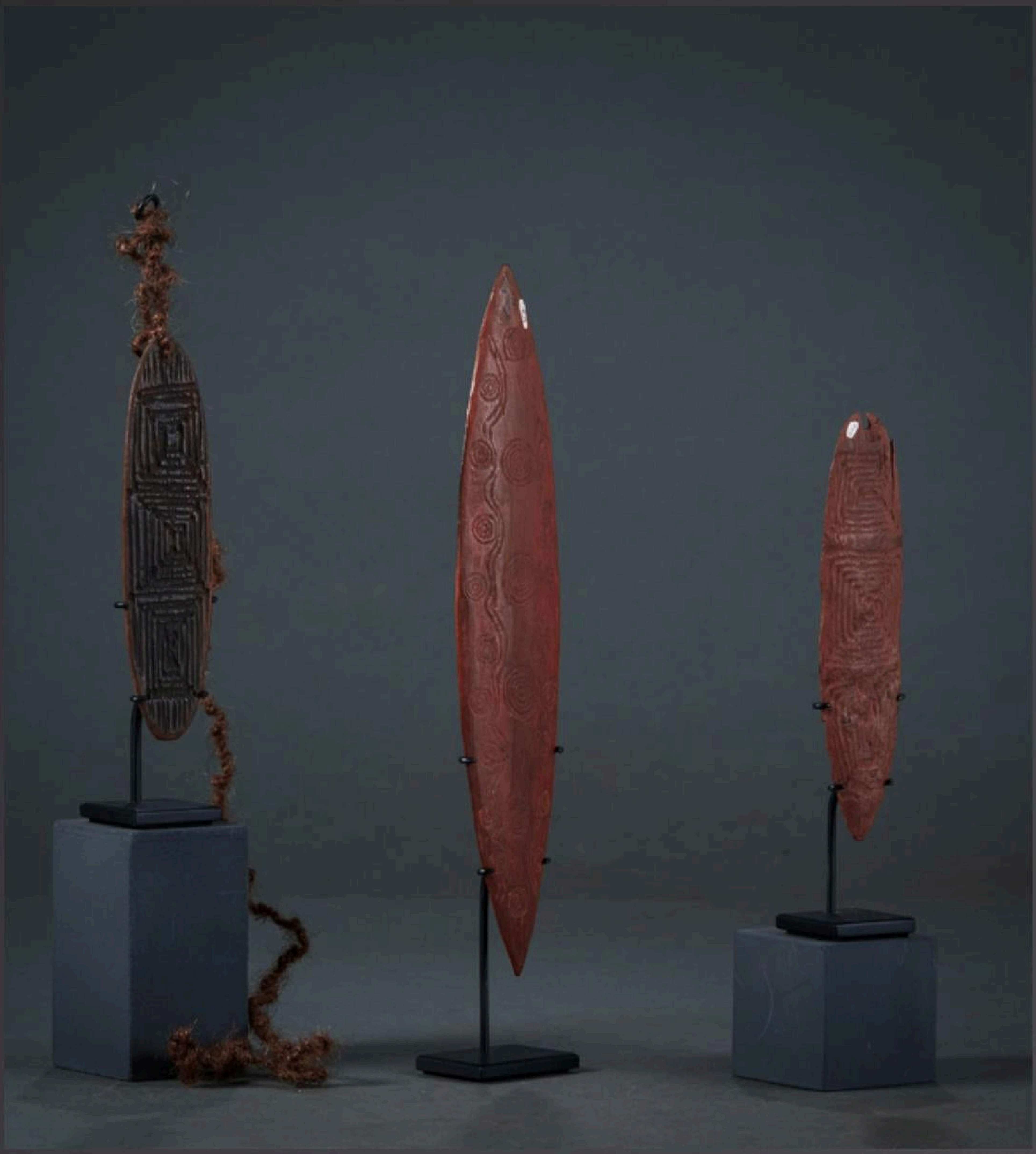
37. Three Old Aboriginal Churringas, Australia

These three churringas (two are in fact also bullroarers) are quite small, and probably personal objects that could actually be carried by the nomadic Aborigines as they moved around their landscape. Larger churrings were invariably left in caves or rock shelters, until the tribe's seasonal return.

a) Small bullroarer, Central desert, Yuendumu region. Northern Territory.
Ex-coll Jim Anderson, Sydney.
15 x 4 cm $ 750

b) Small churinga, Pitjantjara tribe, collected near Angus Downs station by Dunmall. These are the Anangu people, who live approx, 300 km south of Alice Springs nears the SA border.
Carved both sides with cicles and abstract motifs relating to water holes, landscape etc, catalogue number "030"
27 x 5.5 cm $ 800

c) Ancient small bullroarer, collected near Anna Plains station in the Kimberly region by Ray Williams and later traded with Dunmall for convict-realted artefacts.
Dunmall catalogue number "036".
16.5 x 4.5 cm $ 750



38a. Shark Hook, Mortlock Islands, far eastern PNG

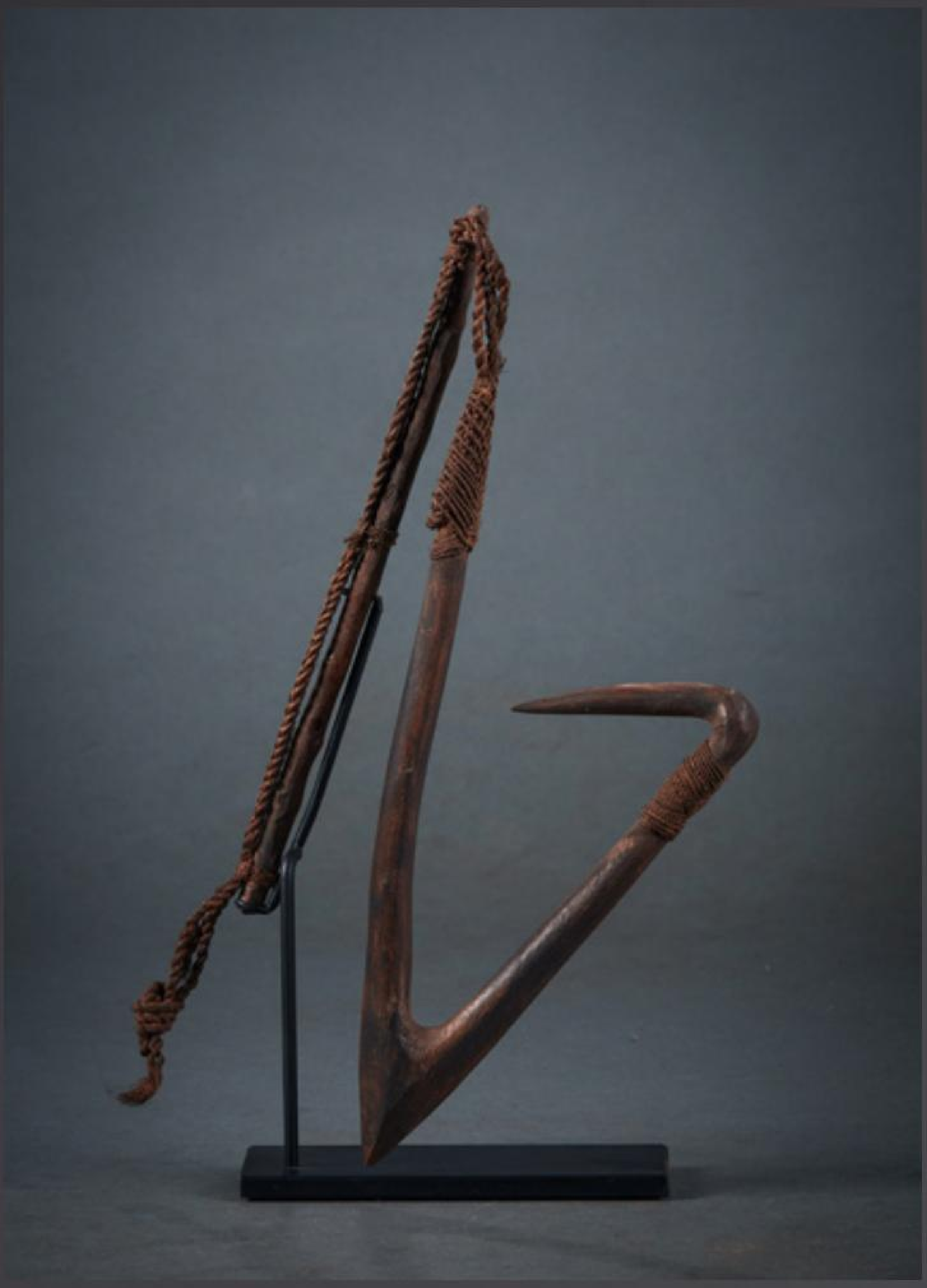
A very precise combination of branch joint and branch shape are needed to be able to make one of these shark hooks. A very hard wood is selected, and it is important that the angled part is formed by a tree branch which has inherent strength. Plaited coconut fibre is used to form the ropes that connect the secondary shaft, and hence the main rope. These hooks are generally used to catch a particular fish, the oil fish (Ruvettus pretiosus), which is highly prized by the Mortlock fishermen. Early to mid-20th Century. Ex-Hawaiian collection.

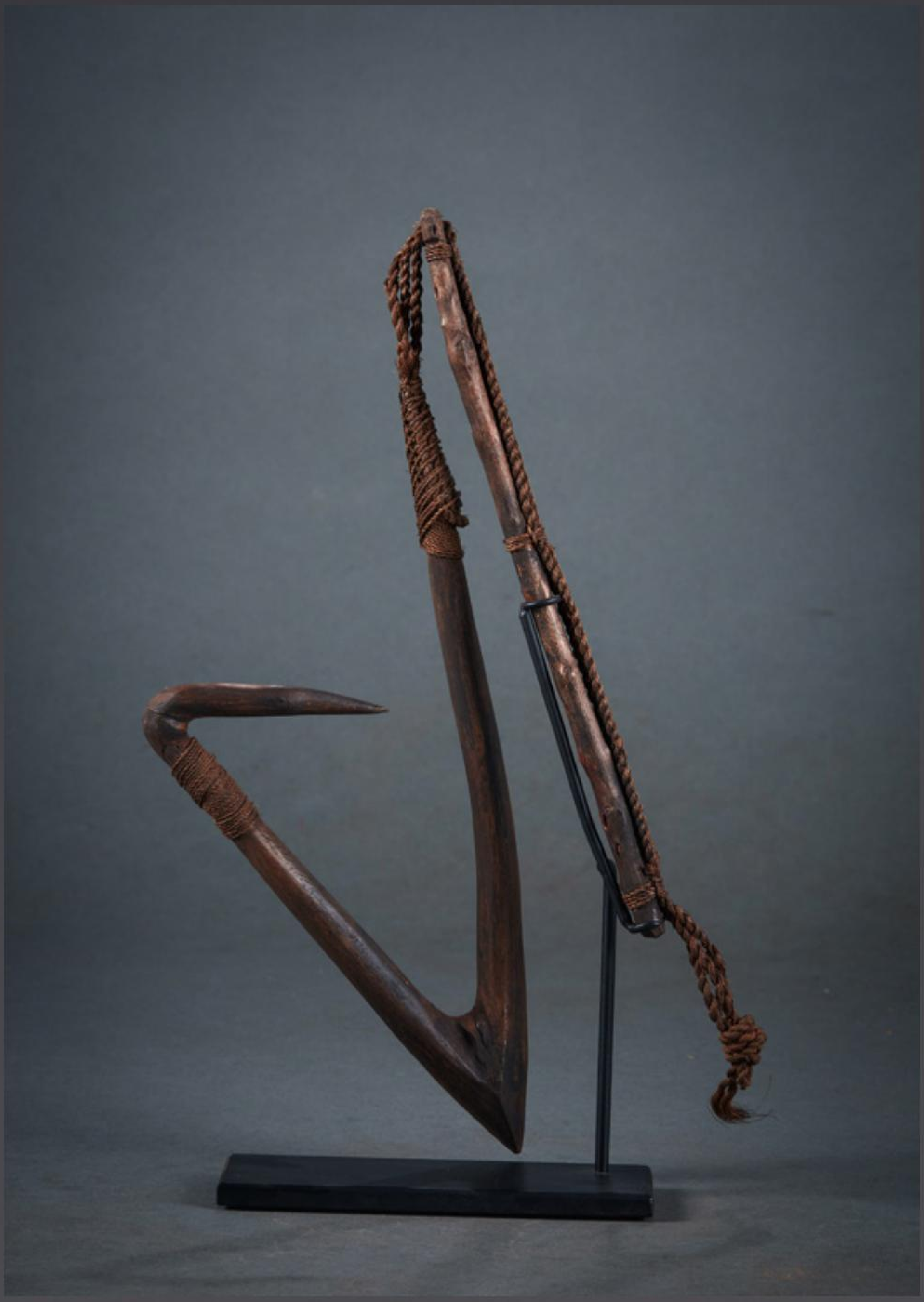
35 x 26 cm $ 600

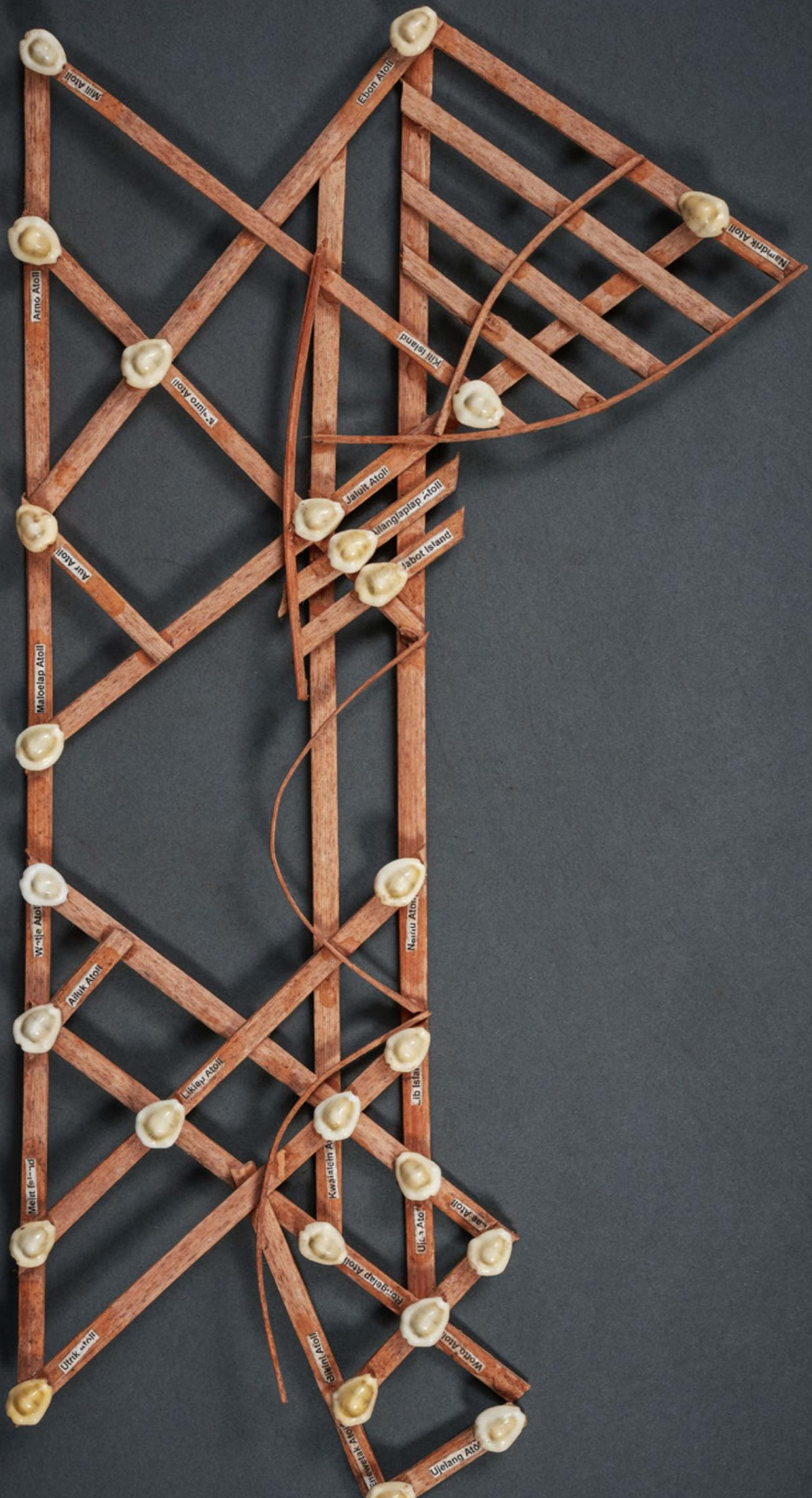
38b. Micronesian Navigation Chart, Marshall Islands

Micronesians are among the world's greatest sailors who traditionally sailed vast areas of the Pacific Ocean on their ocean -going canoes. The Marshall Island group consists of 34 coral atolls and hundreds of islands spread over over 10000 miles. They devised charts showing not only islands and atolls but there knowledge of currents, swells and wave patterns. They were a basic abstract form created from sticks and shells.
Charts vary in sizes. This is a relatively small chart that depicts a part of the Marshall Islands territory. The charts were not carried on voyages but used as instruction devices beore leaving on these journeys. Ex-Hawaiian collection.

52 x 27 cm $ 1,000



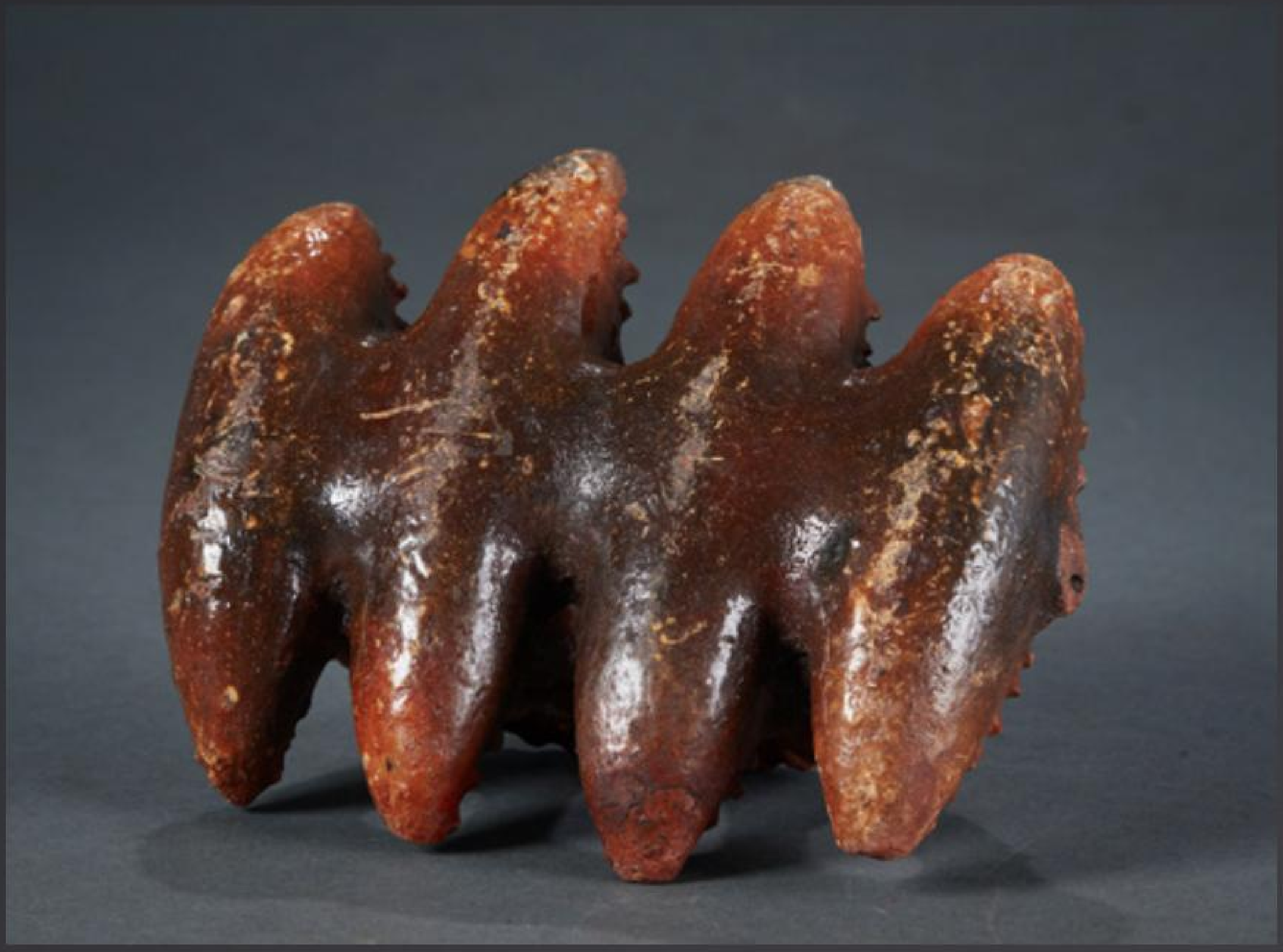


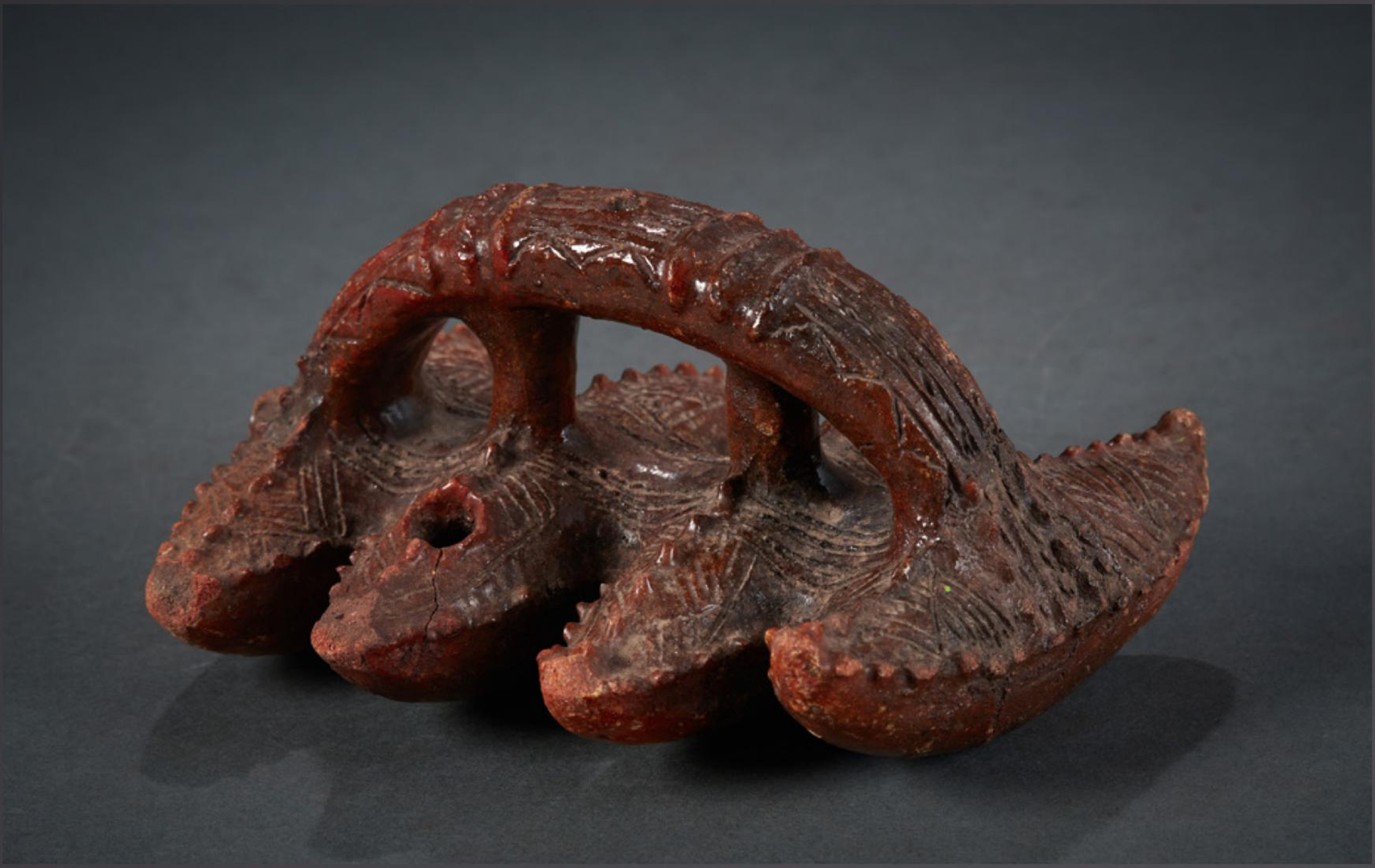

Mili Atoll
Ebon Atoll
Namdrik Atoll
Arno Atoll
Kili Island
Majuro Atoll
Jaluit Atoll
Ailinglaplap Atoll
Jabot Island
Aur Atoll
Maloelap Atoll
Wotje Atoll
Namu Atoll
Ailuk Atoll
Likiep Atoll
Lib Islan
Kwajalein At
Mejit Island
Lae Atoll
Ujae Atoll
Rongelap Atoll
Utrik Atoll
Wotho Atoll
Bikini Atoll
Enewetak Atoll
Ujelang Atol

39. Old Sacred Water Pot Fiji, 19th/Early 20th Century

A unique style of pottery was made on the islands of Viti Levu and Bau in Fiji. This pot is finely made and covered in what appears to be a glaze, and was used by high-ranking chiefs as drinking vessels. The form of these pots symbolises *tabua* (whale teeth), double canoes or various fruits and signify the *tapu* nature of these chiefs. These pots were made in certain locations by women of particular clan groups. They were fired at low temperature, with no true glaze being possible. The Fijians applied a “varnish” in the form of a resin made from the dakua tree which is rubbed over the vessel while hot, and gives it waterproof quality.
These elongated portions, joined along the sides, and with an arched handle above are called *saqa drua tabua*. Their shape relates to the important and valuable whale tooth pendants, *tabua*. The opening on the handle is for filling the oil or water; those below for pouring. It is covered in elaborate motifs.

9 x 17 x 15 cm $ 850



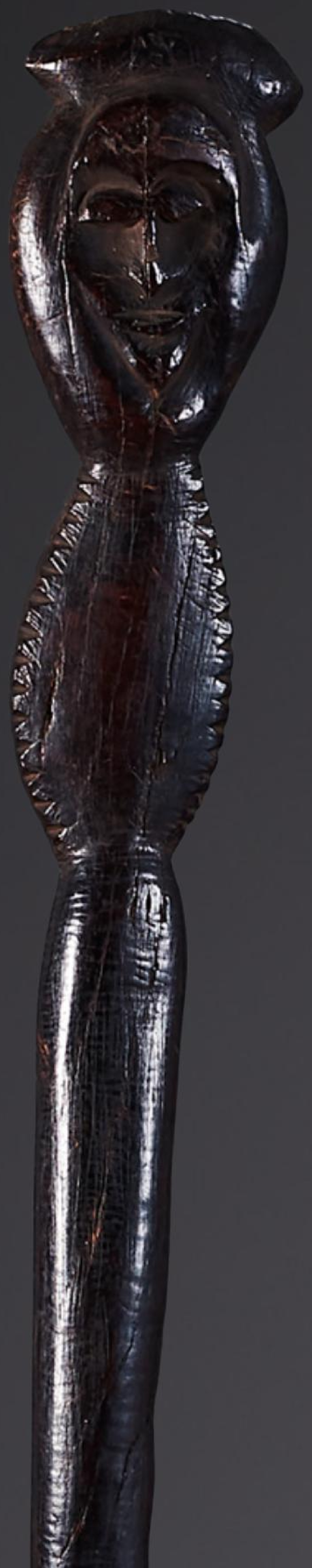


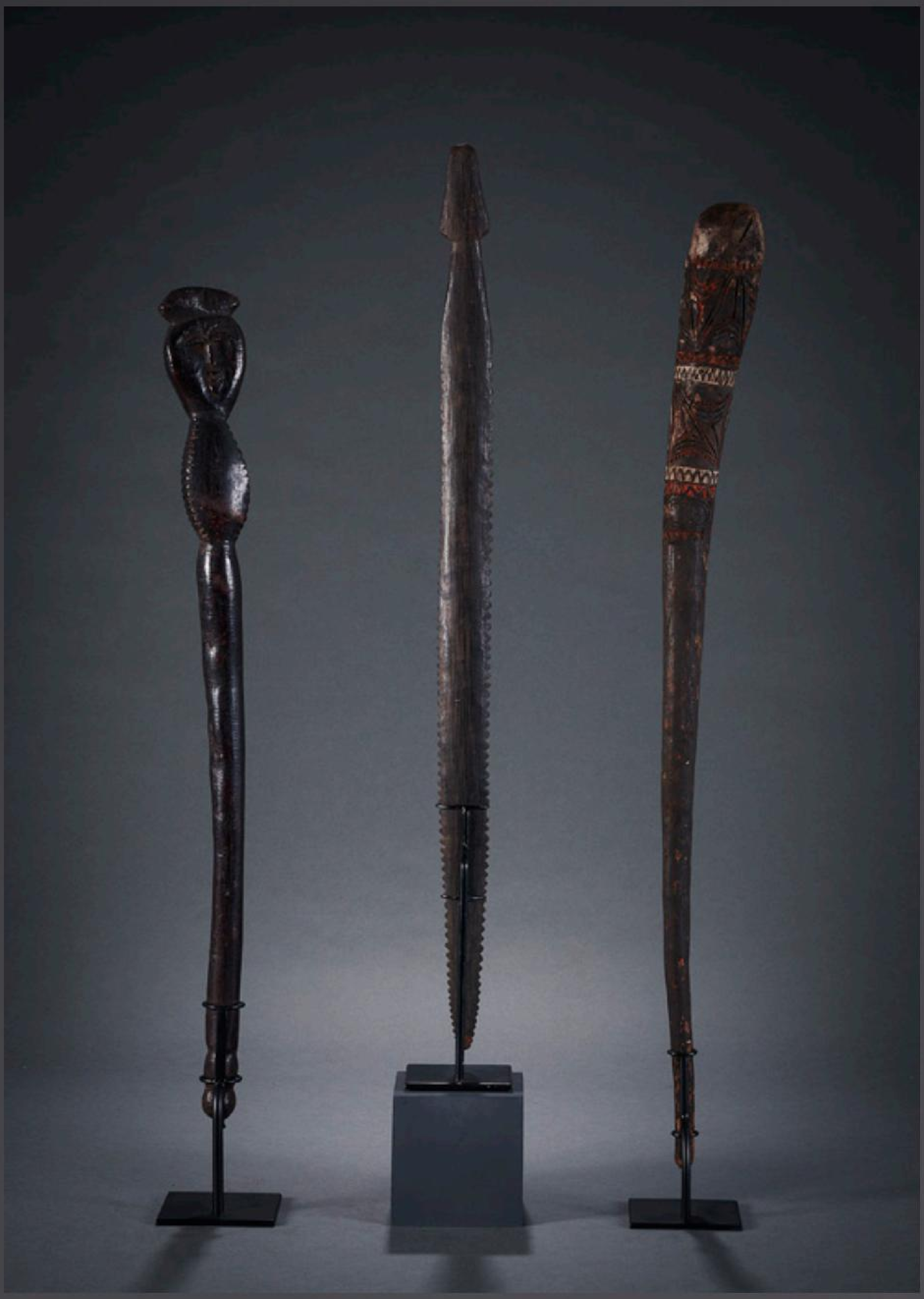
40. Three Oceanic Clubs, 19th/early 20thC

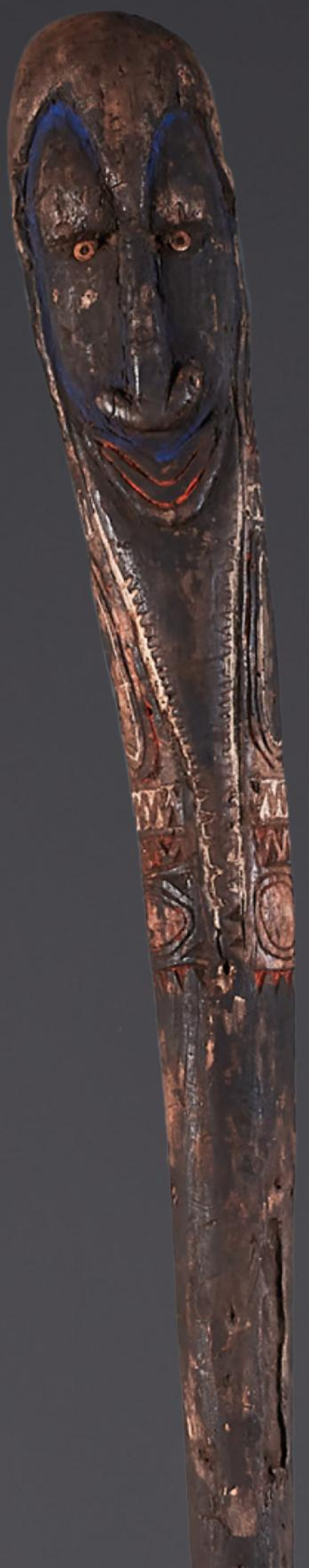
a) Fighting club, Vanuatu. The top of this sinuous club is dominated by janus faces, each showing quite different expressions. It is a rare club form, with dark overall patina. A similar example (but with a very straight handle) is in the Musée du Quai Branly, collected by French ethnographer Jean Guiart on Ambrym in 1949. The more famous similar club was collected by James Cook in 1774 and is now in the Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford. (1888.1.1466).
a) 78 x 8 x 4 cm   a) $ 2,800

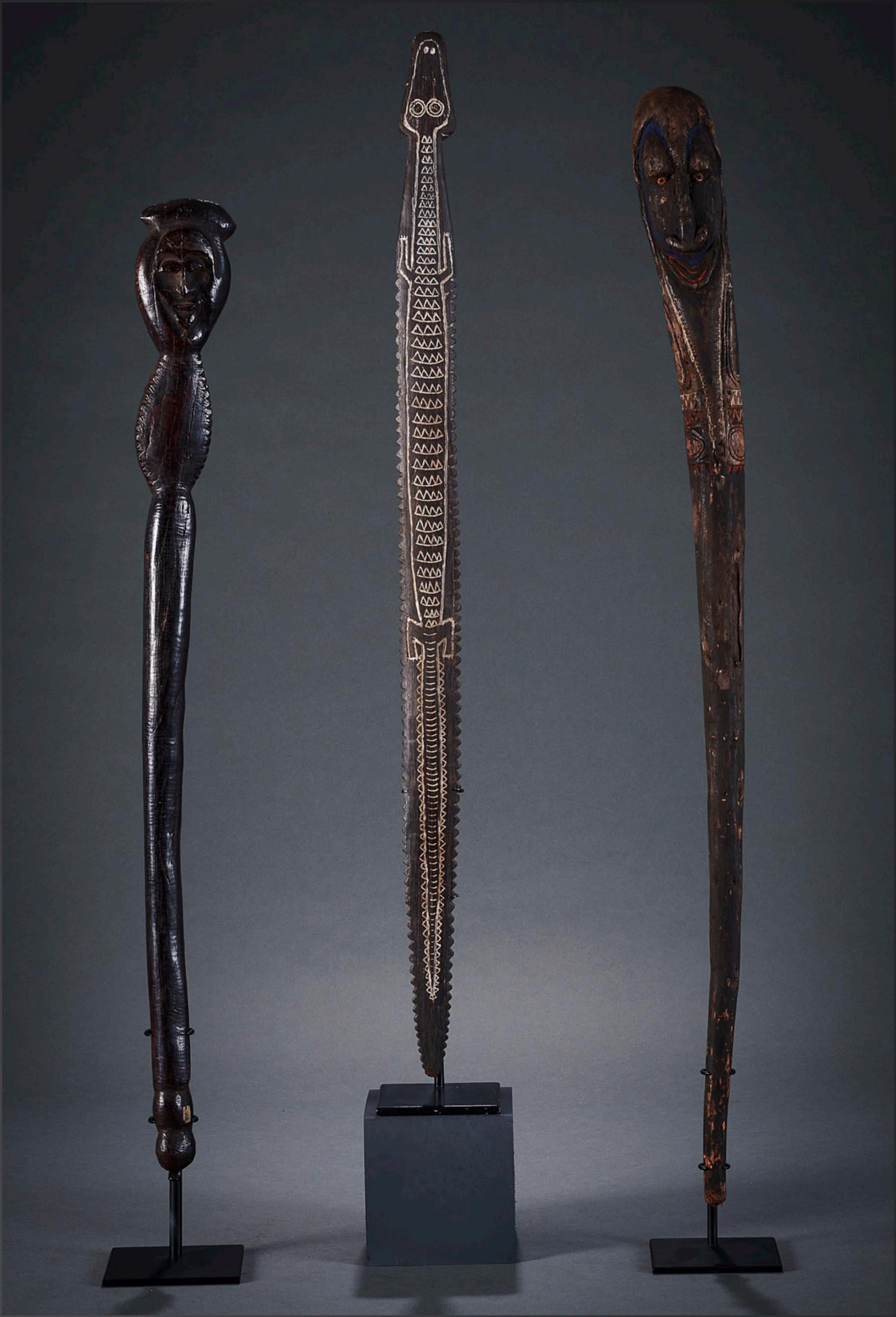
b) Fighting/dance club, Bougainville Island, PNG. This club is hardwood with serrated edges that would be damaging in close combat. The club is dominated by a large engraved crocodile, highlighted with applied lime. Early 20thC.
b) 84 x 6 x 3 cm   b) $ 800

c) Dance club, Sepik River region, exact location unknown, but possibly Korowari River. There is a dominant face at the top with fine engraving overall and remnants of white, orange and blue pigments. The tapering handle is long and slim. It is carved from a light, balsa-like wood. Early 20thC. From the collection of Dr Fred Gerrits, who travelled the Sepik in the early 1960s.
c) 91 x 7 x7 cm   c) $ 1,000





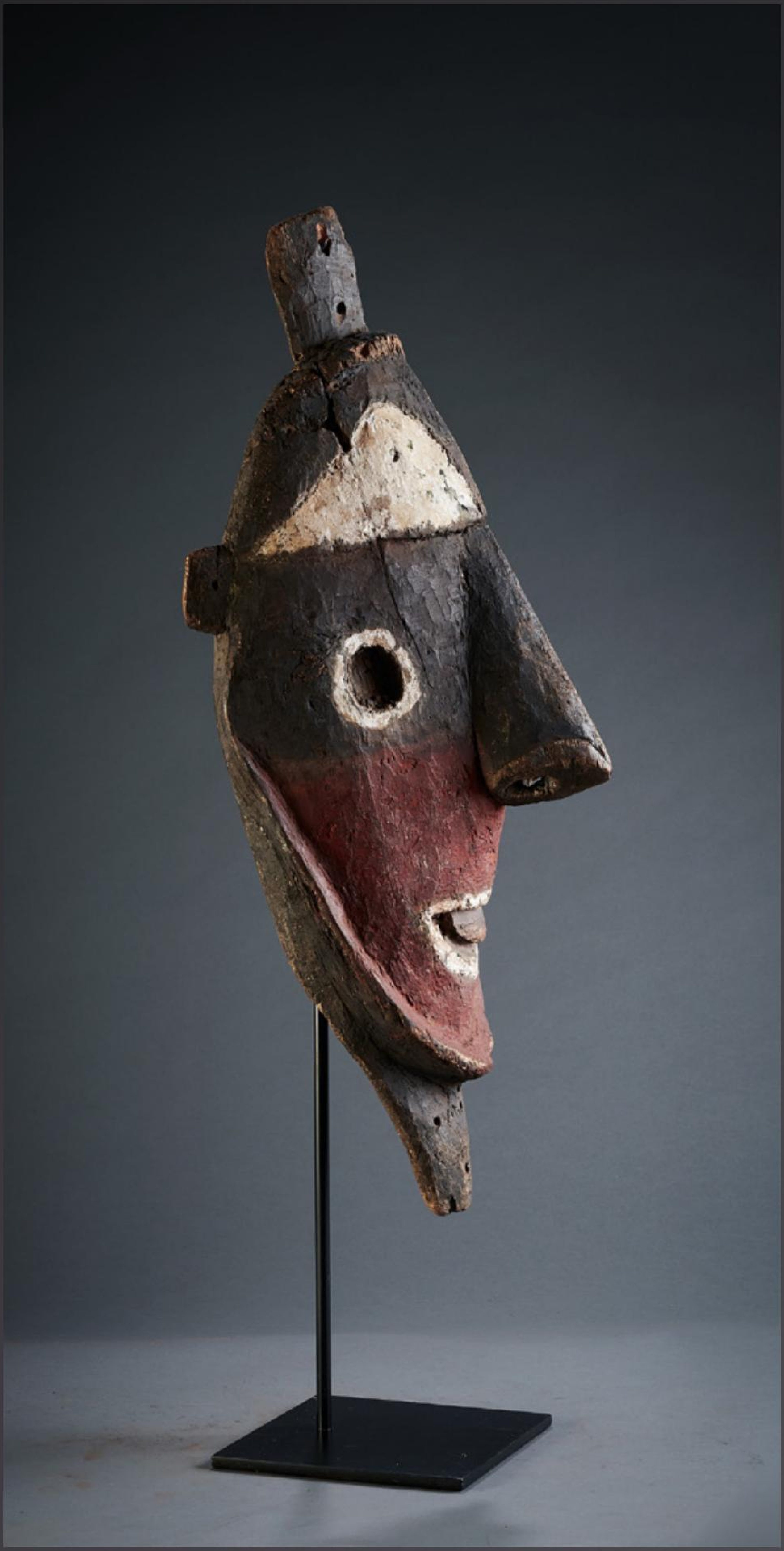


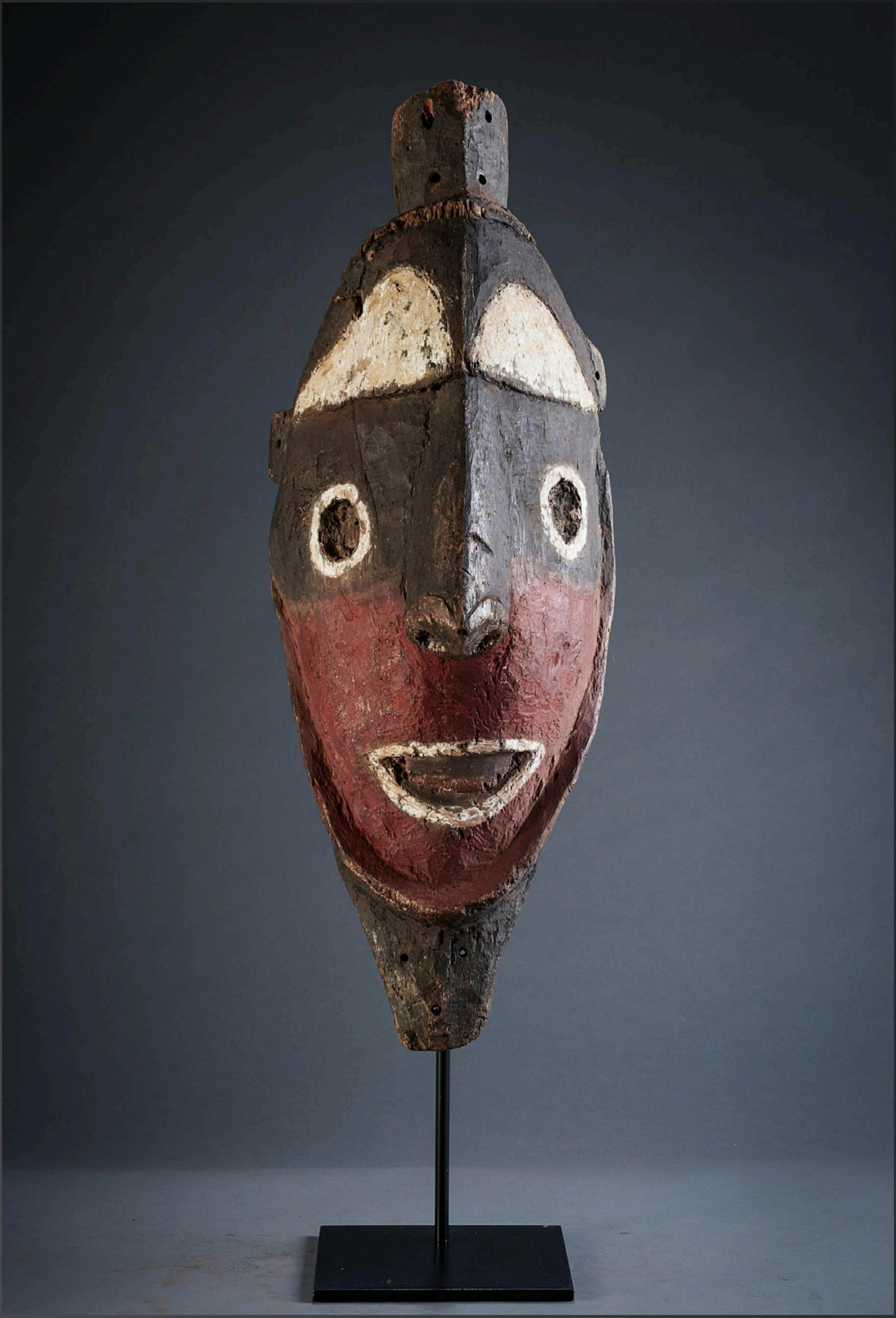


41. Large Nukuma Mask, Washkuk Hills, Upper Sepik River, PNG Early 20thC

These wooden masks were an integral part of the *Nogwi* ceremony, the third and final (and most sacred) of the yam fertility ceremonies that were held annually after the harvest to insure continued fertility. Several platforms were constructed inside (or beside) the Ceremonial House just prior to the *Nogwi* ceremony beginning; one platform was decorated with decorated ancestor skulls and wooden heads. In later years only wooden heads were used. Douglas Newton records this in “Crocodile and Cassowary” (1971), and shows several examples of *Kwoma* wooden heads, but none from the Nukuma, which were larger and more impressive. Flanges with holes at the top and bottom of the mask were to attach it securely to the platform’s framework. Like the ancestor skulls, these masks were also adorned with shell jewellery, hence pierced ears and septum.

76 x 29 x 16 cm $ 3,500

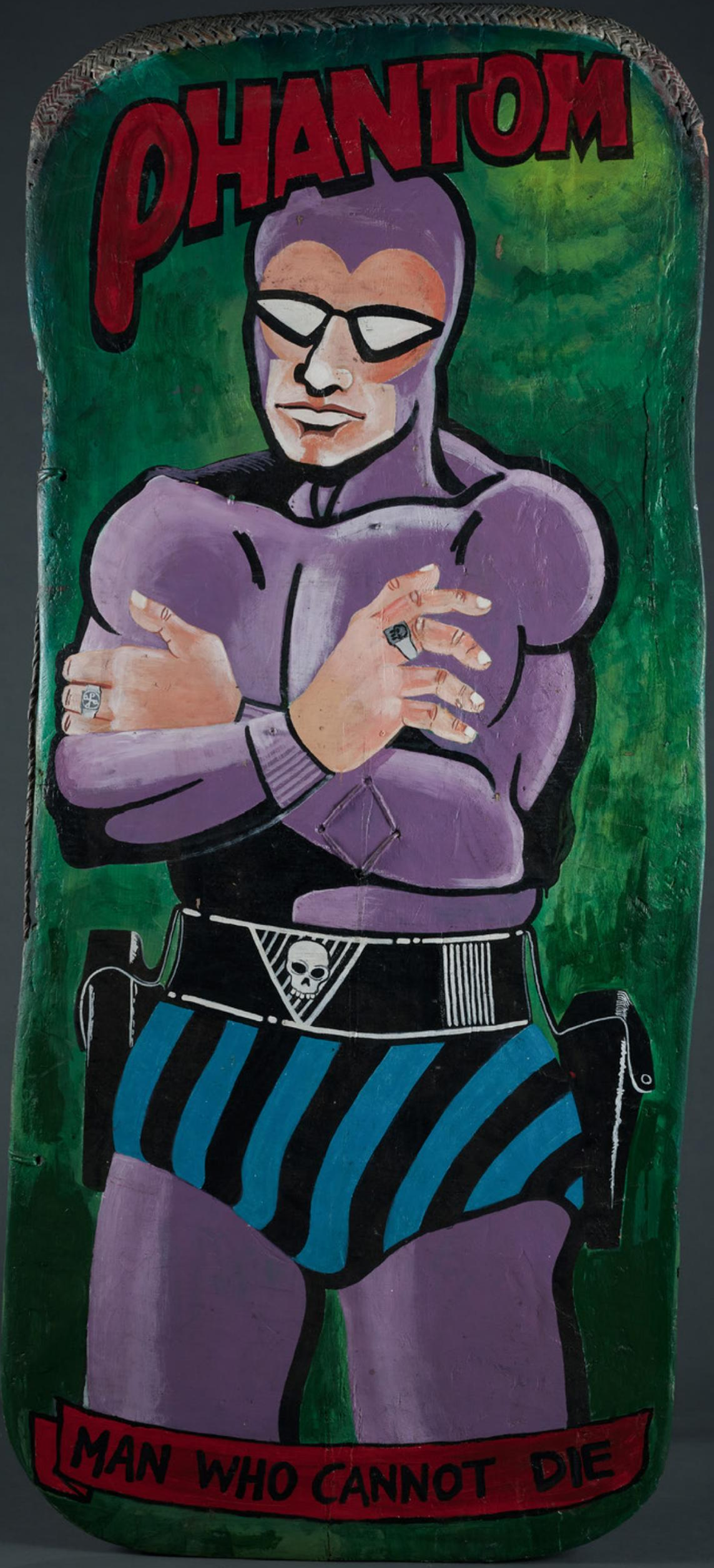




Phantom Shield, Wahgi Valley, Papua New Guinea Highlands
Artist: unknown. Circa 2008-2010

The Phantom is painted in purple, against a green glowing background: this would have stood out impressively on the battlefield of the Wahgi Valley. The figure stands strongly and resolutely, with “PHANTOM” written in bold red above, and below the figure are the words “man who cannot die”. Wahgi children in the 1970s and 1980s were among the first large groups of Highlanders who were educated: they eagerly awaited the Phantom comics that were imported into the local Mt Hagen newsagency, and read them, till they became absorbed into their culture. Because much of The Phantom comic story paralleled their own cosmology closely. When these students became the new generation of warriors, they wanted to paint new images, not just traditional ones on their shields. Hence their developed a new artistic tradition, totally brought to fruition by the Wahgi artists themselves.

167 x 72 cm $ 6,000


PHANTOM
MAN WHO CANNOT DIE